

ENGLAND IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

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WITH FOUR MAPS



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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

IN England, as in France and Germany, the main characteristic of the last fifty years, from the point of view of the student of history, has been that new material has been accumulating much faster than it can be assimilated or absorbed. The standard works of the 19th-century historians need to be revised, or even to be put aside as obsolete, in the light of the new information that is coming in so rapidly and in such vast bulk.

The series of which this volume forms a part is intended to do something towards meeting the demand for information brought up to date. Individual historians will not sit down, as once they were wont, to write twenty-volume works in the style of Hume or Lingard, embracing a dozen centuries of annals. It is not to be desired that they should—the writer who is most satisfactory in dealing with Anglo-Saxon antiquities is not likely to be the one who will best discuss the antecedents of the Reformation, or the constitutional history of the Stuart period. But something can be done by judicious co-operation. In the thirty-four years since the first volume of this series appeared in 1904, it would seem that the idea has justified itself,

as the various sections have passed through many editions and revisions varying from six to sixteen.

Each is intended to give something more than a mere outline of one period of our national annals, but they have little space for controversy or the discussion of sources. There is, however, a bibliography annexed to most of the series, which will show the inquirer where information of the more special kind is to be sought. Moreover, a number of maps are to be found at the end of each volume which, as it is hoped, will make it unnecessary for the reader to be continually referring to large historical atlases—tomes which (as we must confess with regret) are not to be discovered in every private library. . . .

The general editor and his collaborators have been touched lightly by the hand of time. All regret the too early decease of our colleague Henry Carless Davis, sometime Regius Professor of Modern History in this University, who wrote the second of the eight volumes of the series. He had several times revised his contribution. Most of us survivors continue to do the same from time to time, as the pen (or sometimes the spade) produces new sources of information. Naturally the spade is particularly active for the purveying of fresh material for the first of our volumes, and the pen (or the press) for the two last. Information must be kept up to date, whatever the epoch concerned, even though it is known that much undiscovered evidence may yet be forthcoming in the near future.

C. OMAN

OXFORD, 1st April, 1937

P R E F A C E

I HAVE to acknowledge my great indebtedness to Mr. L. Stampa both for reading through the greater part of the MS. of this book and suggesting emendations and alterations and for his invaluable help in the preparation of the maps. I should add that in constructing the map of Northern England and Scotland I got much help from Professor Tout's similar map in Vol. III. of the *Political History of England*, and that my map of England during the Wars of the Roses owes a similar debt to the map in Dr. Poole's *Historical Atlas of Modern Europe*.

The necessity of compressing a very important period, covering 213 years, into five hundred pages, has caused much to be left out which I should have liked to see inserted. The original manuscript has been cut down by some 100 pages from the shape in which it left my hands.

I should like to add my warmest thanks for Professor Oman's kindness and consideration to me throughout the preparation of the book.

The book has been thoroughly revised for the second edition and the account of the Battle of Bannockburn has been entirely rewritten in the light of recent research.

K. H. V.

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CHAPTER I

THE LEGAL REORGANISATION OF EDWARD I. (1272-1307)

AS Henry III. lay dying in the royal palace of Westminster a new era was dawning for England, and a change of ruler was to inaugurate a new phase in national development. Though absent from England, Edward was universally acknowledged King at his father's death. Proclaimed at Paul's Cross on the day of Henry III's funeral, his claim on his newly acquired kingdom was never disputed, and the chief men of England, headed by the Earls of Gloucester and Surrey, swore fealty to their new sovereign on the high altar at Westminster. Three days later—on November 23rd—the Council met at the Temple, and there ordered the proclamation of the new King's peace, drafted a letter to Edward informing him of his accession and of their unswerving loyalty, and gave instructions for the making of a new seal. The government devolved without question upon those whom Edward had appointed to look after his interests in his absence. Of these the Archbishop of York, Roger Mortimer, and Robert Burnell were alive and in England, and their task seems to have been discharged without difficulty. No real danger threatened the provisional government. The country indeed was far more quiet than it had been some few years back, and a greater sense of national responsibility was becoming apparent. In some cases local politics proved a disturbing factor, and the Londoners were only reduced to quiet after the King's representative had sanctioned the election to the mayoralty of their great popular leader Walter Hevey, but even in London there was no question as to the legitimacy of Edward's claim to the throne by "hereditary right and the election of the magnates".¹ The hereditary claim indeed was considerably strengthened by Edward's accession, since it was necessary for the welfare of the

¹ *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, 155.

kingdom that there should be no break in the King's peace. Though he was not there in person to undertake the duties of kingship, his reign was dated from the day of his father's funeral, and the way was thus paved for the later doctrine, not formally promulgated till the reign of Edward IV, that the King never dies.

The kingdom to which Edward now succeeded had entered upon the more distinctively English part of its development. The differences between Norman and Saxon had disappeared under the influence of constant intermarriage and the united action against the foreign friends of Henry III. As the reign of Edward I developed a dawning sense of English nationality began to show itself, and in all branches of society a tendency to require an English king to devote his attention to English interests can be traced. Edward was expected by his subjects to be an English king, and nobly he lived up to this ideal, though the nation might not always understand his actions. Still truly English, even insular, in his objects, his conception of insularity did not entail a complete isolation from European politics. He would refuse to be drawn into such hair-brained schemes as the acceptance of the crown of Sicily for his brother Edmund, but at the same time his foreign policy showed a keen interest in England's position on the continent. It was only to be expected that he would cling with all the pertinacity of his determined nature to his inheritance of Aquitaine, and resist to the utmost of his power the encroachments of France, yet even here national considerations played their part, for it must be remembered that the connection with Aquitaine was a valuable asset to Englishmen, on account of the flourishing trade which existed between the two countries. It is then as a national king, realising the growing national feeling of his subjects, that Edward must be regarded, as a man who understood the aspirations of the men whom he ruled, though perhaps sometimes impatient of the way his policy was misunderstood or opposed. He had every reason to know his subjects. He had learnt experience in a hard school. When not quite thirteen he had been appointed to govern Gascony. The Barons' War had taught him the dangers of civil strife and the peril of weak government. Notwithstanding his love for his father, he must have realised that Henry III's career was of use to him more as a warning than as an example, and before his accession he had learnt the lessons of determination and consistency.

✓ His private life was chaste in an age when marital fidelity was by no means an universal virtue, and he was upright according to the lights of his time. He was always addicted to martial exercises : the tournament was one of his favourite pastimes, and he was never tired of organising these displays of skill and bravery. He would alternate the conquest of Wales with such a friendly battle, or set up the Ring at Stirling whilst prosecuting his Scottish policy,¹ and at the very outset of his reign he came very near to losing his life when the treacherous Count of Châlons turned a friendly trial of skill into a bitter combat.² He had inherited too his Norman ancestors' love of hunting, and all through his life he would chase the stag and fly his hawk at every opportunity. His strong arms made him a doughty swordsman, and the length of limb, which earned him the name of Longshanks or Longchamps, enabled him to sit the most fiery steed. Of right royal appearance, with a high forehead, and abundant black hair, which turned snow-white in old age, his one defect was a droop of the eyelid, a characteristic inherited from his father. This splendid body ministered to an active mind, which kept him vigorous to an age far beyond the allotted span of thirteenth-century men. He was naturally quick of temper and impatient of opposition, but there are but few traces in his career as king of that impetuous rashness which lost his side the day on the downs of Lewes. The partisans of De Montfort had described him in his youth as arbitrary, treacherous, and ever ready under compulsion to make promises which he as readily broke.³ It is true that in later life Edward followed the bad example of other kings, and secured papal dispensation for an oath taken to the nation ; but, viewed as a whole, his life shows a greater nobility of purpose than that of any king before him. If easily roused to anger, intolerant of injuries, and ready to dare the utmost in avenging a wrong, he was prompt to forgive, if a true submission were made to his domineering will. But at times his anger carried him away,⁴ and in private life his attendants had reason to know the weight of his hand when lifted in anger⁵. The prolonged resistance

¹ *Annales Lond.*, 104

² *Hemngburgh*, 1., 338-339.

³ Political Songs (Camden Society), 93-94.

⁴ *Rishanger*, 431.

⁵ On the day of his daughter Margaret's marriage, he struck an esquire on the head with a rod for no adequate reason, and for this he paid compensation to the extent of twenty marks. *Manners and Household Expenses*, ed. T. H. Turner (Roxburgh Club, 1841), p. lxx, quoting Wardrobe Book, 18 Edward I., fol. 45b.

of Archbishop Winchelsey towards the end of his reign drove him to resort to violent language, while his famous threat to Roger Bigod in 1297 exposed him to a retort which he was powerless to avenge. There was also in Edward's character a strange lack of human feeling, which cropped up now and again. To Charles of Anjou, who wondered at the grief he evinced on hearing of his father's death and the lack of sorrow when about the same time news reached him that his son John had also died, he made the callous remark that "Children multiplied speedily, and a son could be replaced, whereas one could not have more than one father"¹. Again it was an incapacity to appreciate the human side of life which led him to strain so severely the letter of the law in his relations with Wales and Scotland. It is this blemish more than any other in Edward's character which makes appreciation stop short of enthusiasm, although he has been hailed as "the greatest king of his age, wellnigh the greatest king of any age". On the other hand his conscientious determination—in spite of advancing age and failing health—to pursue what he believed to be right, must rouse admiration. The young man of arbitrary inclinations and impetuous spirit became the great lawgiver, the great organiser, and the great politician. It would almost seem that he had taken to heart the not too friendly advice tendered him in the "Song of Lewes": "if thou wouldest have a kingdom reverence the laws . . . they shine like a lamp. Therefore avoid and detest treachery; labour after truth, and hate falsehood."²

Almost two years elapsed between Edward's accession and his return to England, but this does not mean that he was unwilling to take up his kingly duties, since during that period he laid the foundations of the foreign policy which he was to follow continuously throughout his reign. From Trapani in Sicily, where the news of his father's death reached him, he proceeded through southern Italy to Rome, where he received a somewhat furtive if gushing greeting from the Pope, who feared that his resentment would be roused by the immunity enjoyed by the De Montforts for their cold-blooded murder of his cousin Henry of Cornwall at Viterbo. Welcomed in all the towns of northern Italy, he crossed the Mont

¹ *Trevet*, 284. There is a classical touch about this story which may perhaps detract from its credibility. Cf. *Herodotus*, bk. iii, 119, and *Antigone*, 905.

² *Political Songs* (Camden Society), 95.

Cenis, to be met by a band of English magnates who had come to congratulate him on his accession.¹ On his way to Paris he gave rein to his martial ardour by accepting the challenge of the Count of Châlons to a tournament, which, thanks to the treacherous conduct of the Count, developed into a very serious combat. This "little war of Châlons," was the last outburst of Edward's irresponsible youth, and when he appeared in Paris shortly after, he had put off the prince and assumed the demeanour of the king. His reception at Paris was all that he could have wished, and his cousin Philip of France entertained him right royally. Yet there were reasons which would prevent any really good understanding between the two kings, and their protestations of affection rang hollow. Edward performed homage for his French possessions, but in terms which suggested to those who heard them that there might be more claims to French territory put forward by the English King in the near future. The vague formula—"Lord King I do you homage for all the lands which I ought to hold of you"—might even conceal a definite intention to revive English claims to Normandy.² It was obvious, at any rate, that the relations between France and England were not too well defined, and when Edward left Paris for Gascony, he must have seen fresh troubles with his overlord of France looming in the distance.

In Gascony, Edward rejoined his wife, who had been visiting her brother Alfonso V. of Castile, and soon found that the turbulence of the district demanded his presence for a long period. He had in particular to repress the turbulent robber baron Gaston de Béarn, who for some time past had been disturbing the peace of Gascony. Here French intervention was probable, as the unruly Gascon nobles were only too prone to appeal to the overlord at Paris against the decisions of the English Duke. After some trouble the old freebooter was captured, and gave his word not to leave the Court without the King's leave.³ Breaking his oath, however, he escaped to the fastnesses of the Pays de Soule, and as soon as Edward had left Gascony appealed to Philip of France. The appeal was accepted, but the French Court, unwilling to provoke Edward, decided against Gaston, who was sent to England to make

¹ *Trevet*, 284-285

² *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 31.

³ *Annales Lond.*, 84; *Foedera*, i. 505.

his peace, and for a time was induced to refrain from rebellious actions¹

Edward's return home was still further delayed at the request of the Pope, who feared that if the coronation coincided with his newly summoned Council at Lyons, English ecclesiastics would be prevented from attendance there. The delay, however, was not lost time, as it enabled the King to settle a dispute with Flanders, which had troubled the commercial relations of England and that country during the last years of his father's reign. The Countess of Flanders, having been refused an absurd claim to an English pension, had retaliated by seizing the merchandise of all English traders then in Flanders, and Edward replied by banishing all Flemings, ordering the sailors of the Cinque Ports to seize all ships sailing with wool to Flanders, and further forbidding the export of wool altogether. The effect was to bring the Flemish weaving trade to a standstill, and so great was the distress that Count Guy was compelled to offer terms. Edward decided to settle the matter at a personal interview at Montreuil, which proved entirely successful. The King made allowance for Guy's absence on the Crusade when the hostile policy was inaugurated, and it was agreed that the losses of English and Flemish merchants through the seizures should be set off one against the other, and the balance given to those merchants who had suffered most, the pension claim being ignored.²

Thus Edward had sown the seeds of his foreign policy, he had pacified Gascony for the time being, and he had settled a trade dispute which threatened the economic welfare of his country. It was then not as a new King, but as one who had already done much for his country's welfare, that he landed at Dover on August 2nd, and made his way by slow stages to London. The coronation festivities on August 18th were accompanied by great rejoicings, and the London citizens celebrated the event by running red and white wine from the Conduit in Cheap for all comers to drink.

The first outstanding event of Edward's active reign was the summoning of his first general Parliament in April, 1275, to which came representatives both from towns and counties³. The Commons, having been called upon at the outset to supplement the

¹ *Annales Lond.*, 84-85

² *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, 159-161, 167, 171; *Foedera*, i 153-154.

³ *English Historical Review*, xxv. 231-242

monetary resources of the Government, consented to the establishment of a new principle in taxation. Wool, now the chief produce of England, had been subject to arbitrary seizures in the past, but the Parliament of 1275 brought this lucrative trade under legal contribution for the royal revenue, by granting to the King and his heirs, with the consent of Lords and Commonalty, and at the express request of the merchants, a duty of half a mark on every sack of wool and every three hundred wool-fells, and a mark on every last of leather exported abroad¹. Thus a new departure was made in regulating the quota contributed by commerce as well as land to the general needs of the nation. Henceforth the "Magna et Antiqua Custuma" ranked as an important item in the royal revenue, but all attempts to increase the rate of the levy were steadily opposed, as Edward was to find to his cost.

This establishment of the King's Government upon a more secure financial basis was but the prelude to a thorough organisation of the legal system of the country, which continued to a certain extent throughout the reign, but was mostly carried out during the earlier years, interrupted only by the war with Wales in 1277. The activity of Edward I.'s Government in this direction was three-fold. As the Osney annalist put it, some laws which had been corrupted by abuse were recalled to their due form, some which were less evident and clear of interpretation were restated, and some new ones, both useful and honourable, were added.² Codification of laws was a common phenomenon in Europe at this period, and Edward had probably assimilated his legal theories during his wanderings, and especially during his stay in Sicily, for there are many points of similarity between his enactments and the Sicilian constitutions of Frederick II. In England too Edward was but succeeding to ideas which had been developing during his father's reign. A few years before the new King came to the throne Bracton had compiled his monumental law book, based on the decisions of his predecessors on the Bench, and the statutes and ordinances of Henry III. had in some directions at least paved the way for the later work of his son. Arrangement and definition were the two great objects of the lawyers of the time, and in carrying them out they produced the Common Law of England, which

¹ Parliamentary Writs, i. 2, Stubbs' *Charters* 451-452.

² *Osney Annals*, 304.

was to be the most characteristic product of the English race. It is not without significance that in the reign of Edward the reporting of legal cases first becomes a definite practice. A few reports exist for the reign of Henry III., but it is only from the year 1302 onward that we have evidence of consistent reporting in court, though even then it was probably not performed by an official scribe.¹ The reports thus made have been preserved in the Year Books which form to a great extent the foundation of the "lex non scrip'a" of England. The interest in law which characterised the reign is manifested also in the legal literature of the period. The work popularly known as *Bruton*, though based largely on Bracton's treatise, has an individuality of its own. The speculative jurisprudence of the former work was omitted, additions from the legislation of Edward I. brought it up to date, and the language now was French instead of Latin.² This summary of Bracton's treatise seems to have been much used by later lawyers, for the large number of manuscripts in which it still survives testify to its popularity. Two other legal books are to be attributed to the same period, but neither of them attained the same vogue, and indeed it is doubtful whether they can be treated seriously. The *Fleta* purports to have been written in the Fleet prison,³ so is frankly no unbiased account of the legislation of the time, while *The Mirror of Justices*⁴ plays fast and loose with facts, makes wilful misstatements, and must be regarded as no more than a political pamphlet levelled at the judges accused of malpractices in 1289. Nevertheless, *The Mirror* was taken seriously by the lawyers of a later age, and was appealed to as the calculated statement of some legal luminary of the Edwardian period.

The lawyer was becoming a very important factor in the life of the nation, and he was influenced by the re-discovery of Roman Law, which characterised the earliest stages of the intellectual re-

¹ For a discussion of the value of these reports see Year Books, 1 & 2 Edward II., ed. F. W. Maitland (Selden Society, 1903), vol. 1., Introduction, pp. xi-xiv.

² At one time *Bruton* was attributed to John le Breton, one of Henry III.'s judges, who was appointed to the See of Hereford in 1269 and died in 1275, but the work was obviously written in or soon after 1290, and there is a possibility that the name is a corruption of Bratton—the form in which Bracton's name is most usually found—and was therefore borrowed from the earlier work.

³ *Fleta ab anonymo conscriptus* (London, 1685).

⁴ Edited by W. J. Whittaker (Selden Society, 1895).

vival in Italy and other parts of Europe. Among Edward's advisers the learned Francesco Acciisi, Professor of Roman Law, and son of a famous Italian legist, held a prominent place, and he, at least, must have looked at English law through Roman spectacles, whilst the author of *Britton* followed a wholly Roman precedent in placing the law as expounded by him in the mouth of the King. Thus to many of his legal advisers Edward was the fount of law, and the pleaders in the various courts claimed the loftiest powers for their sovereign. But in spite of this influence of Roman ideas, the law developed mainly on English lines, and the reign of Edward I. ranks as the period from which all subsequent legal development flows. Of the King's English advisers the most prominent was the Chancellor, Robert Burnell. During the previous reign he had acted as clerk to the household of his future sovereign,¹ on whose return from abroad he was at once made Chancellor, though Edward had no complaint against the acting Chancellor, Walter de Merton, to whom he had written from Melun, thanking him for his diligence in the affairs of the kingdom. From this time till his death in 1292 Burnell continued to be Chancellor and the chief adviser of the King. A brilliant lawyer, he preserved his master's confidence, doubtless through his great intellectual gifts, and died Bishop of Bath and Wells, though a none too censorious age spoke of his lax morals and his large family no less than of his courteous manners and his accessibility to all comers.² Another great lawyer, who in spite of a momentary eclipse, served Edward well, was Ralph de Hengham, raised to the Bench by Henry III. One of the legal writers of the age, he is known as the author of the tracts called the *Summa Hengham*,³ and is credited with the compilation of several others. He was probably employed in drafting much of the legislation of the reign, for when on one occasion counsel pleading before him began to describe the second Statute of Westminster, he was interrupted from the Bench by the remark, "we know it better than you, for we drew it up".⁴

The first great step towards the reorganisation and classification

¹ Cal of Patent Rolls (1272-1281), 357.

² *Annals of Worcester*, 510, *Dunstable Annals*, 373.

³ *Hengham Magna* and *Hengham Parva*, published with Sir J. Fortescue's *De Laudibus Legum Angliae* (for the Companie of Stationers, 1616)

⁴ Year Books, 30 & 31 Edward I. (Rolls Series, 1863), p. xxx.

of the English legal system was taken by the issue of the writs "Quo Warranto". These were directed against the liberties and franchises of the great lords, in an attempt to define and limit such jurisdictions as did not come under the direct control of the King. The holders of these liberties claimed a variety of judicial privileges. Some were exempt from doing suit at Shire and Hundred courts, others had the right to adjudicate all pleas of the Crown in their Manorial courts, while in some instances, though the King's justices tried the cases, the lords received the fines exacted, and carried out the punishments inflicted. On the other hand, some classes, such as the Templars and the Hospitallers, possessed the right to be tried in the King's courts wherever they were, which to some extent weakened the manorial jurisdiction. All claims to such jurisdiction came within the scope of the "Quo Warranto" inquiry, which was avowedly levelled at liberties which "impeded the common course of justice". A subordinate purpose was to discover what lands the King held now, what his predecessors had held in the past, and to ascertain by what right the balance had been alienated¹. In the past the varying franchises claimed by the lord had not been classified, but now for the first time the lawyer drew a distinction between the exercise of "regalia" or royal rights—especially in criminal jurisdiction—and the regulation of the merely domestic matters of the manor. As a rule the different cases had been tried in the same court and under the same procedure, but now the Court Leet, exercising royal jurisdiction, was definitely separated from the Court Baron, enjoying strictly manorial rights². It was with regard to the first of these two that the present inquiry was made, perhaps as much with the idea of defining and restricting further claims, as in the hopes of regaining jurisdiction that had been lost. So slowly did the inquiry proceed, that in 1278 the Statute of Gloucester ordered that the writs should be returnable before the Justices in Eyre, and the sheriffs were ordered to see this done.³ Obviously the King's action was meeting with considerable opposition, which was only increased by this latter move. Many declared that the King meant to interfere with the rights of private property, and open resistance to the inquiry was offered by the

¹ *Foedera*, i. 517.

² *Select Pleas in Manorial Courts*, Introduction, pp. xviii-xxvi.

³ *Statutes*, i. 45.

Earls of Gloucester and Surrey, the latter indeed, if the chronicler is to be believed, making a famous melodramatic scene. Showing a rusty sword, he told the Commissioners that with the sword his ancestors had helped William the Bastard to win his lands, and with the sword he was ready to defend his rights¹. In more legal form his attorney claimed before the justices a large number of jurisdictions, on the ground that his ancestors had held them from time immemorial, but without documentary proof, and the jury found in his favour². This bold defence of his rights, backed up by the action of many other discontented lords, did not, as the chronicler asserts, induce the King to lay aside his project, though it did suggest to him a line of compromise. In 1290 he agreed to accept a proof of continuous seizin from the first year of Richard I's reign as sufficient ground for the possession of a franchise,³ though the lawyers still pleaded that a proof of user, however long, was not a good title. If the King did not succeed in regaining much jurisdiction which had passed into other hands, by asking for more than he could expect to secure he was able to systematise the liberties, to establish for the first time a distinction between the king's peace and the regulation of purely local affairs, and to make it clearly understood that the assumption of the royal rights of justice was in the future to be considered an usurpation. The creation of new rights was definitely stopped, and the lawyers henceforth used every device, not only to restrain further encroachments on the royal justice, but also to expand it in all possible directions. This expansion is illustrated by the use made of one clause in the Statute of Gloucester, which ordered that no one was to have a writ of trespass in the King's court unless the goods taken away were valued at more than forty shillings, for the lawyers construed this to mean that all cases in which the damage exceeded forty shillings were to be tried in the King's court, and that the local court had then no jurisdiction. The opposition of those who held the privileges was natural, and moreover, the class from which jurors were drawn was ever ready to support the local court, since the fear of royal justice, so prevalent in the past, had not been finally eradicated. Ultimately men came to see the value of homo-

¹ Hemingburgh, ii. 6. Cf. Stubbs' *Charters*, 431-432.

² *Placita de Quo Warranto*, 750-751.

³ Statutes, i. 107

geneous law and an universal legal authority, and as the royal courts, thanks largely to the reforms of Edward I, began to do their work more justly and with greater authority than in the past, they triumphed over their local rivals, and the Edwardian principle secured its final triumph.

Edward's great objection to judicial liberties beyond his control is well illustrated by his dealings with the chief town of his kingdom. He could not regard the privileges of London with any favour, though he could not deny that they were well founded, and that the documentary proof of their legitimacy was uncontested. But his opportunity came from the disturbed state of the city and the weakness of its corporate government. Riots between the craft guilds, headed by Walter Hervey, and the rich traders of the city had disturbed the death-bed of Henry III, and since then the triumph of the aristocratic party had not brought peace and good government. The officials were corrupt, and the Mayor seems to have been quite unable to control his unruly subordinates. The King's opportunity came when the Mayor, being summoned in the ordinary course to answer before the justices in the Tower for the peace of the city, appeared before them not as Mayor but merely as "an Alderman of the city and a neighbour of the citizens," a procedure probably dictated by fear of an inquiry into the legitimacy of the civic liberties and its attendant cost. The Treasurer, John de Kukby, who seems to have been prepared for this contingency, promptly replied that as there was no Mayor there could be no proper government of the city, which he "took into the King's hands," that is to say, the liberties were suspended and a Warden, appointed by the King, governed the city instead of the elected Mayor.¹ Edward's custom of taking advantage of the technicalities of the law is here well shown, but he used his power in the city in a strictly constitutional manner, the citizens were consulted in all matters by the Warden, and ultimately in 1298 their privileges were restored. As a result a marked change was to be noticed in the peace of the city.

The restoration of peace and order in London is but one example of Edward's reforms. The country was still suffering from the effects of the civil war. Outrages, escapes from prison,

¹ *Annales Lond.*, 91-95.

and violence of every kind are constantly noted by the chroniclers and recorded in the Patent Rolls. A party of robbers disguised as priests could rob the fair at Boston and burn the town. The Abbey and city of Carlisle were burned by incendiaries, even the Treasury at Westminster and the Monastery of the Carmelites in London were not safe from robbers.¹ In 1276 the Rageman Act, as it was called, sent out justices to inquire into all cases of malversation, trespass, and neglect on the part of the sheriffs and other officers of the Crown, during the last twenty-five years.² As a result a large number of sheriffs were removed, though nearly all of them had been appointed but two years previously, when Edward inaugurated his reign by drastic changes in the county officials. Two years later one of the clauses of the Statute of Gloucester was directed against the misdeeds of the King's bailiffs,³ and every effort was made to cleanse the channels of justice. Even then peace was not assured, and in 1305 it was found necessary to issue special commissions, known as *writs of Tialbaston*, to put down malefactors and disturbers of the peace. As a still surer means of strengthening the King's peace, statutes intended to re-arrange and codify the existing legal system, and the administration of justice, were drawn up. They mostly covered a large field, few of them being confined to one subject. The Statute of Westminster I. (1275) was a legal code in itself, and was welcomed by the men of the time as covering all fields of legal activity.⁴ No less than nine clauses were directed against judicial abuses by King's officers, the law of wreckage was defined, the rate of aids due to the King and other feudal matters were regulated, the holding of the assize and other administrative business were arranged, the market tolls were placed within reasonable limits, elections were ordered to be free and to be protected from the interference of armed men. The Statute of Westminster II. (1285) carried this policy still further. On the other hand, the Statute of Winchester, which followed closely on the Statute of Westminster II., was concerned mainly with police regulations, and the expansion of the Assize of Arms of 1181. The weapons, which every man was expected to keep by him to assist in the preservation of the peace, were once more detailed and brought up to date, the gates of walled towns were to

¹ Hemingburgh, II. 17-18 and 40, *Annales Lond.*, 88, 143-144, Knighton, I. 280.

² Statutes, I. 44.

³ *Ibid.*, I. 46.

⁴ Wykes, 263.

be guarded in a prescribed fashion, and the King's highway was to be cleared of brushwood and other cover, which might assist the robber to conceal his presence.

The two Statutes of Westminster and that of Gloucester dealt largely with the law of real property, and the most famous of the enactments concerned with this branch of legislation was the "De Donis Conditionalibus" clause of the Statute of Westminster II, which influenced all the subsequent history of landed property in the country. Henceforth, if a man gave lands to another and the heirs of his body, the grantor's wishes were to be fully carried out, so that it should be no longer possible for the grantee of such land to alienate it as soon as an heir was born; the latter should succeed and nothing should bar his right, but in default of heirs the land was to return to the original donor¹. Thus the transfer of real estate was restricted to an extent hitherto unknown by making it possible to ensure a perpetual entail. The Statute of "Quia Emptores," published in 1290, had a directly opposite effect, in that it simplified the transfer of land which was not held conditionally, though its immediate intention probably was not to procure this result. The practice of subinfeudation had been on the increase all through the thirteenth century, and the result had been to obscure the rights of the overlord, for when a tenant alienated a part of his holding, the new tenant held of the man who had sold him the property. Henceforth, however, all lands so alienated were to be held directly of the original overlord, by the same tenure as the original tenant had held them. This measure relieved the large landowners from considerable loss and inconvenience, though the real reason for its enactment was most likely the fact that subinfeudation had had the effect of creating many new local courts, and that this was very unpalatable to the King. The mere record of this legislation, extensive though it was, gives no idea of the care with which Edward regulated the minutest details of procedure, which was organized both by the judges at Westminster and by those working the newly rearranged circuits, of which from 1273 onwards there were four, with two judges apportioned to each.

¹ Statutes, i. 71-72. Hitherto it had been the custom to interpret a gift to a man and his heirs as being to a man "if he had heirs". Therefore as soon as an heir was born the grantee was considered to have fulfilled the condition of the grant, and could alienate the land. Even if the grantee's heir died the alienation held good, and on his death the gift did not revert to the grantor.

Though law and order were twin subjects of devotion with Edward, there were other reasons for this legislative activity. First, he desired to limit the power of the great nobles, and the writs of "Quo Warranto," the Statutes of Gloucester and "Quia Emptores,"¹ and the definition and enforcement of restraint of knighthood were all intended to achieve this end. Secondly, there was the ever-pressing need of money. The royal revenue was not increasing in proportion to the expenses of a King who had begun his reign with a load of personal debt—a legacy from the Crusade. Edward with his lawyer's instinct was not slow in devising methods to improve his financial position. In days when it could be said that "justitia est magnum emolumentum," it was distinctly lucrative to enlarge the borders of the royal courts at the expense of those of the magnates, and generally to reorganise the administration of justice so as to increase its profits. This last aspect is clearly brought out in some of Edward's directions to his officials, notably in his order issued to the Exchequer in 1284, where the keeping of the Shire Rolls and the tallies of the sheriffs, and the classification of bad debts are all obviously intended to increase the revenue by a systematic keeping of accounts.² Moreover, to compel all tenants of land worth £20 a year to assume knightly rank or pay a heavy fine—freeholders being strangely reluctant to become knights—and to prevent subinfeudation from cutting down the number of those owing feudal dues to the King, were equally to the financial advantage of the Crown. Thus it may be argued with some truth that the mainspring of Edward's legislation lay in the needs of his purse, and that in him a love of organisation and legal definition was increased by the strain on his resources.

As a financier Edward realised the advantage of encouraging trade, and, apart from minor regulation of domestic matters, there is an illustration of this in the Statute of Acton Burnell. A merchant's debts were thereby made more easily recoverable, if he took the trouble to have them attested in writing in the presence

¹ It is sometimes stated that "Quia Emptores" was passed in the interest of the great lords, but the King claimed the right to restrain alienation by his tenants, and nothing is said about this in the statute. Indeed the King lost nothing, while the great lords ran the risk of losing the services of tenants who had now full rights of alienation. See Pollock and Maitland, *History of English Law before Edward I.*,

^{1.} 337.

² Statutes, i. 69-70.

of the Mayors of London, York, or Bristol, or any clerk authorised by the King to act in this capacity. If necessary, the debtor was to be sold up to pay such debts, and if he had no assets he was to be imprisoned, but with characteristic economy the King provided that in prison he should be fed at his creditor's expense¹. Hitherto the giving of credit had been practically impossible, since there had been no effective way of recovering debts, but now things became easier, and thus was taken the first step towards forming an English code of commercial law. The scope of this ordinance was extended to merchant strangers, and later in the reign the *Carta Mercatoria* of 1303 expressly allowed foreign traders to come freely and openly to England, to take away their merchandise and dispose of it as they would, and exempted them from local dues and the old right of prisage in return for a legalised rate of import and export duties.² This rate was in excess of that levied on English merchants, who refused their consent to similar dues,³ and was known as the *Nova* or *Parva Custuma* in contradistinction to the *Magna et Antiqua Custuma* of 1275. Thus Edward again showed his financial ability in realising that a fixed import duty would be more lucrative than the uncertain right of prisage, and that foreign merchants would come more freely to England if they knew their obligations beforehand, and were not liable to sudden and uncertain exactions. By the *Carta Mercatoria*, too, a special judge was established in London to try suits brought by alien merchants, if the sheriffs failed to do speedy justice. Edward encouraged such local special courts for commercial cases, and almost every fair in England had its temporary Piepowder Court⁴ to try cases arising from transactions in the market, and sometimes, as at Bristol where it survives to the present day, a town had a permanent mercantile tribunal known as the Tolsey Court, where speedy justice was administered without the usual cumbersome formalities. Edward realised the value of a local court when

¹ Statutes, i 53-54. Cf. Stubbs' *Charters*, 469.

² *Annales Lond.*, 130-131, *Liber Custumarum*, 205-211.

³ *Parliamentary Writs*, i 134-135.

⁴ The name Piepowder is derived from "pie poudreux," and the court was so called not, as Sir Edward Coke thought, because justice was administered as speedily as dust could fall from the feet of litigants, but because the court was frequented by chapmen with dusty feet. See *Select Pleas on the Law Merchant*, ed C Gross (Selden Society, 1908), vol 1 Introduction, p. xiv.

it did not interfere with the King's judicial rights. He thus placed the coping-stone on his great legal and administrative work by encouraging commerce, while at the same time he showed in his dealings with the merchants, both foreign and English, that financial considerations lay at the root of all his domestic policy.

CHAPTER II

THE CONQUEST OF WALES
(1275-1294)

IN spite of Edward's preoccupation in arranging and reforming the laws of his kingdom, he did not neglect the other obligations of his position. His first great undertaking outside the realm of law was the reduction of Wales, which had long been a thorn in the side of Englishmen. The Celtic temperament was particularly fitted for the work of harassing the borderland, and Edward, as Earl of Chester in his father's day, had already experienced the complications which resulted when Wales took a hand in English politics. His natural desire would be to reduce the Principality to obedience, and even from the first he may have planned the incorporation of Wales in his kingdom. If this was his intention, Llewelyn of Gwynedd, Prince of North Wales, played into his hands in every direction. His successful resistance to English interference in the past had given him an exaggerated estimate of his power, though up to the death of Henry III he seems to have fulfilled the terms of the Treaty of Shrewsbury of 1267, and to have paid the war indemnity with some show of regularity. The accession of a new king seemed a chance to strike a blow for still greater independence. After 1272 no more instalments of the indemnity were forthcoming, and a demand by the regents that homage should be paid for Wales was evaded. Llewelyn was rendered the more self-confident by his successful suppression of a revolt headed by his brother David and Griffith, Lord of Powys, who had been compelled to flee to England. Thus the invitation to Edward's coronation, equally with the repeated summons to do homage, was ignored. It was in vain that the King journeyed to Shrewsbury, and on another occasion to Chester, no Prince came. At last, to a definite summons to appear at the Parliament at

Westminster, he retorted that he could not trust himself in England.¹ This refusal was a new departure, since Llewelyn the Great had never denied that he was a vassal prince. Imagining that he could paralyse English action by stirring up internal disturbances in the kingdom, the Prince sent to France for Eleanor de Montfort, the bride promised to him in the days when he supported the baronial opposition to Henry III. The plan failed, since Eleanor and her brother Amaury were captured on the way to Wales by the sailors of four English ships, and brought into the port of Bristol, whence they were sent to the King who placed them in honourable confinement.² But English patience was becoming exhausted. The threatened alliance with a possible discontented party in England could not be ignored, though there is no evidence that any such danger was seriously anticipated. The Archbishop of Canterbury was sent to make a last appeal to Llewelyn: but he was given an arrogant reply, demanding safe-conducts, the release of Eleanor, and the payment of homage at some border fortress. Thereupon the King determined, with the consent of another Council, to treat the Prince as a rebel, and the feudal levies were called out for the following June (1277). One more effort was made by the English prelates to bring Llewelyn to submit by threats of excommunication,³ though in vain, as he had already placed his case before the Pope. In the following February the ecclesiastical ban was duly launched.⁴

Llewelyn had been treated with great forbearance. Again and again his evasions had been met with a further summons but no hostile movement. The only complaints that he could make were that his rebellious brother David and the Lord of Powys had found shelter in England,⁵ and that his bride was detained in the Tower: but in both cases Edward had full justification for his actions. War was deliberately provoked by the Welsh leader. he had placed himself in the position of a rebel, whom his overlord could justly

¹ *Annales Lond.*, 85, Trevet, 292

² Trevet, 294. Hemingburgh, n. 5, says they were captured by sailors of the Cinque Ports.

³ *Foedera*, i 536-537

⁴ *Ibid.*, 528, 541.

⁵ This was Llewelyn's plea when writing to the Pope Cf *Brut-y-Tywysogion*, 362.

punish by the confiscation of his estates. Thus with his legal conscience at rest Edward embarked on his Welsh war.

The feudal levies were not to be ready till June, so the King determined to employ the interval in opening up the way into Wales, and by an immediate attack to prevent Llewelyn from securing an early success by a raid on England, for which his troops were so well adapted. The Marchers and the small permanent force attached to the royal household were sent out in three detachments. The weakness of Llewelyn's position was soon apparent, for though much headway was not made by the English arms in the North, where his clansmen were faithful, the middle and southern districts soon threw off their allegiance to the Welsh Prince. Pain de Chaworth conquered Cardiganshire, and Roger Mortimer, having repaired the fortresses of Oswestry and Montgomery, drove Llewelyn himself to abandon Powys, and to retreat towards the North. Finally the arrival of Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, crowned these efforts, and by the time that Edward arrived at Worcester in July, 1277, the whole March was cleared of Welsh, and Llewelyn's power was confined to his northern principality. His best chance was lost. He had been prevented from striking a decisive blow before the English army had been fully mustered, thanks largely to the willingness of the southern Welsh to throw off his rule, and return to their ancient hostility to the Princes of Gwynedd.

By the time that the feudal levy had assembled and had followed the King from Worcester to Chester, the army of about 800 cavalry and 2500 infantry was ready for the main attack upon Wales.¹ Reinforcements had been sent to Mortimer in the centre and to Edmund of Lancaster, who had taken command of the troops working up the western coast.² Llewelyn was shut in by Edward's forces on South and East, and his seaboard was watched by a fleet drawn from the Cinque Ports. Meanwhile, the King had been steadily making his way along the northern coast. His advance was impeded by dense forests which covered the whole country,³ and offered the light-armed Welsh splendid opportunities for surprise attacks. To guard against these, and to secure his communications with Chester, Edward proceeded to cut a broad road through the forest, establishing fortified posts every here and there and

¹ For numbers see Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 126-127.

² *Brut y-Tywysogion*, 368.

³ Wykes, 272.

bringing his army up to them slowly but steadily. To obtain workmen for this purpose he seemingly had recourse to impressment, since they had to be carefully guarded, though paid punctually and liberally. So as to get the full advantage from the co-operation of the fleet, the road was made along the coast-line, and by August 20th Rhuddlan was reached and the castle immediately repaired. Llewelyn, who had been harassing the English as they advanced, now retired into the mountain fastness of Snowdon. The feudal forty-days' service being now past, most of the levies went home, though Edward retained a certain portion, paying them probably for this extra service¹. However, the army was not much reduced, as reinforcements, consisting mainly of Welsh friendlies, had been brought up, and by the end of the month the English had reached Diganwy (Conway). To make the Prince's position still more untenable, the English fleet, strengthened by a portion of Edward's forces, descended upon Anglesey, the granary of North Wales, and reaped or destroyed the corn upon which Llewelyn was depending². The Welsh position was hopeless. All access to the South was buried by the forces of Mortimer and Lancaster; Edward himself, having secured the northern coast-line, was knocking at the gates, the sea was guarded by a hostile fleet, and no supplies could be obtained to relieve the famished men. Surrender was inevitable.

It was at Aberconway that the terms of Llewelyn's surrender were arranged. The Prince was to yield all his past conquests, the Four Cantreds ceded by Henry III being restored to Edward, and only the homage of the five Snowdon barons being left to support the Welsh princely title, which was conceded to Llewelyn for life, but was to lapse entirely at his death. The English forces were to evacuate Anglesey, but an annual rent of 1000 marks was to be paid for this island, in addition to a war indemnity of £50,000. The promise of money payment was a mere formality. When Llewelyn had sworn fealty at Rhuddlan on November 10th, both the indemnity and the rent were remitted. Edward was too wise to insist on an impossible condition, and only ordered it to be inserted in the formal treaty to make manifest the complete surrender of his rebellious vassal.³ Nevertheless, the fact that the principality of North Wales was only granted to Llewelyn for life seems to imply

¹ Cotton, 155

² *Brut-y-Tywysogion*, 368.

³ All the documents are to be found in *Foedera*, i. 545-548.

that Edward intended to bring all Wales ultimately under his direct rule.¹ Llewelyn's submission was confirmed by his attendance at the Christmas festivities at Westminster, where he did homage in due form for his principality, and at last, convinced that his vassal intended to keep the peace, Edward allowed the long-delayed marriage to Eleanor de Montfort to take place at Worcester in October, 1278, attending the ceremony in person.²

For a time there was peace, but Edward was not one of those who make reform more palatable by the use of tact and a conciliatory spirit. He could not understand that in Wales he had to deal with men possessed of a very different temperament to that of his subjects in England, that he was there face to face with a race of ancient traditions and little civilisation, as he would have understood the term, and that to many minds change is heresy, reform but another name for the infringement of rights and liberties. By the treaty of Aberconway it had been agreed that there should be no revolutionary change in the legal system, and that where Welsh or March law had prevailed it should continue. But the royal administrators soon found this unworkable, and the King, while acknowledging his obligation to abide by the undertaking, insisted that the decision as to which law prevailed should be given at times and places settled by himself,³ so that quite soon after the pacification Llewelyn was found complaining of being summoned to appear before courts held outside his principality. Here a conciliatory attitude to Welsh susceptibilities would have injured no English rights; but the royal officials, whose legal learning had been perfected at the expense of their humanity, carried out the strict letter of the law, left natural sentiment out of the reckoning, and laid themselves open to bitter complaints on the score of brutality.⁴ At the same time these trained lawyers looked with horror upon Welsh customs which they could not recognise as law in any sense of the word, and anticipated the reign of George III. by the plea that the King's coronation oath precluded the recogni-

¹ Dr Morris (*Welsh Wars*, 42) thinks that annexation was not Edward's policy at this time, but Anglesey was the only district granted to Llewelyn as an hereditary fief.

² Wykes, 277; *Brut-y-Tywysogion*, 370, *Peckham Letters*, 443

³ Foedera, I. 559-560.

⁴ See Letter of Llewelyn in *Peckham Letters*, 438

tion of laws so directly hostile to Christian ideas, and totally inadequate for the punishment of arson, murder, and such like crimes¹ Acting on the letter of the law, Edward with the support of his Council declared that he was bound to recognise in the ceded districts only such laws as his predecessors had acknowledged as reasonable, and the same authority drew up a list of the laws that came under this head. It was, however, quite useless to try to govern an untutored people by precedent and legal principles. The judges complained that Welsh law reduced them to the position of mediators, and gave them no authority, but had they talked less of legal maxims, and made an attempt to understand the people with whom they had to deal, their authority would have greatly increased. Just as Frankish and Roman law had existed side by side in conquered Gaul, so did English and Welsh law flourish together in conquered Wales, and it was the attempt to establish the former as a universal system which roused such intense opposition. Homogeneity is the lawyer's keynote, and it was Edward's in particular, so that he even went so far as to consider the advisability of introducing English law into Ireland². But the attempt to introduce the shire and county courts and the jury system into Wales roused opposition such as only the unknown can provoke, an opposition, too, the intensity of which was not easily understood by the English administrators, for it is not only in the thirteenth century that Englishmen have been appalled at the wrong-headedness of a conquered race which has no desire for the improvement of its laws. Moreover, the leaders of the people were rendered hostile, since their liberties were kept within bounds, their jurisdictions threatened by the royal courts, their tenants allowed to appeal against them. Thus discontent was rife in Wales, especially in the Four Cantreds. Llewelyn was girding at what he called the faithlessness and oppression of the King, and even those districts which had fought for Edward in 1277 were alienated. The material for revolt was ready, and it was only a question of when and where the flame would burst forth.

On Palm Sunday, 1282, Llewelyn's brother David rose in arms

¹ *Peckham Letters*, 135-136. For the Welsh laws see *Welsh Medieval Law*, by Geoffrey Smith (Oxford, 1909)

² *Foedera*, i 582

and took Hawarden Castle by surprise, the Marcher baron Roger de Clifford being actually captured in bed. The immediate cause for this sudden rebellion was that the Justiciar of Chester had hanged some of David's men contrary to Welsh custom, and, to make a road, had used the royal authority to cut down some woods belonging to the outraged chief. This, though the excuse, was but the culminating reason for the rising. David, who had been well treated by Edward, having been given rich lands and the hand of one of the King's kinswomen, threw off all feelings of gratitude, because his pride was attacked and his position was not so independent as he had hoped. In the name of Welsh independence he turned to his brother, from whom he had had nothing but evil, who had imprisoned him, and against whom he had plotted,—a reconciliation which the English chronicler compares to the alliance of Herod and Pilate.¹ The revolt spread like wildfire. Ever quick to action, the Welsh rushed to arms, Llewelyn being encouraged to lead the movement by the prophecy that he would one day be crowned in London. With the assistance of David he laid siege to Flint and Rhuddlan, though his brother soon left for a dash southward. The fiery torch was carried through Cardigan and Carmarthen, while emblems of English rule were destroyed in the castles of Brecknock and Radnor. Rhŷs, on the upper Towy, alone stood faithful to the English. After this raid, so characteristic of Welsh methods, David returned to the North, to strengthen the hands of his brother against the inevitable invasion from England.² Edward, though seemingly completely taken by surprise, was prompt to act. The feudal levy was not immediately called out, but certain lords and others were invited to serve the King for pay, possibly because the King had found his paid troops more efficient and more controllable than the forty-days' soldiers in the last campaign. Ships, men, horses, and munitions were collected from England and Gascony; money was borrowed from the Italian merchants, the household troops were despatched in advance to the border, and the English prelates were invited to place the rebels under the ban of the Church.³ Finally at Devizes, in May, the feudal levy was called out for August

¹ Hemingburgh, ii. 9.

² *Annales Cambriæ*, 106-107.

³ Parl. Writs, i. 222-224, 385; Foedera, i. 603-604. Cf. Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 155-156.

2nd, possibly owing to the compulsion of the magnates, who did not relish their place being taken by paid troops. However, when the feudal contingents were mustered at Rhuddlan, it was found that they only numbered about 600 horse.¹ It was the numerical decline of the levy, probably as much as the superior nature of paid troops, which had induced the King to neglect it.

The plan of campaign was roughly the same as in 1277, though the difficulties were greater, as the movement against the English in South Wales was much more widespread than in that year. Edward was quite aware of the seriousness of the rising, and he set out this time with the intention of subduing the Welsh beyond all doubt, however long it might take, a resolve he emphasised by removing the Exchequer and King's Bench to Shrewsbury. The Earl of Gloucester, who commanded the English army in the South, seems to have met a check near Llandilo on the Towy, and retreated. But Reginald de Grey worked up the Dee and occupied Ho^e Castle, and various Marcher lords pressed the Welsh back, so when Luke de Tany, Seneschal of Gascony, arrived with Gascon troops, he was sent to reduce Anglesey.

Meanwhile Edward, with the main army, kept up communications between the various detachments, using Flint and Rhuddlan as his base. By dint of steady pressure the Welsh were driven back to Snowdon, as in 1277. At this moment Archbishop Peckham prevailed upon the King to allow him to offer mediation to Llewelyn. The prelate, it appears, had been in correspondence with the Welsh for some time, and had proposed terms of surrender to the Prince, who had replied with detailed complaints of English perfidy and oppression.² On his return from the Welsh camp, Peckham reported to the King that Llewelyn agreed to submit, should the terms not violate his responsibilities to those associated with him, nor infringe his status as Prince. Accordingly terms of peace were dictated, Llewelyn being privately assured that the magnates would favour a scheme whereby he would be provided with an earldom in England worth £1000, if he handed over his Snowdon dominions. They would urge the King to provide adequately for his daughter, and should he marry again and

¹ For this estimate see Ramsay, *The Dawn of the Constitution*, 341-342.

² *Peckham Letters*, 435-465.

have a male heir—Eleanor having recently died—they would try to secure that son's succession to his father's earldom. As to his subjects, the King was disposed to treat them liberally should they submit. Further, it was suggested that David should find an outlet for his restless spirit in a Crusade, and in the event of his agreeing to this, the King would provide him with a suitable retinue¹

But the Welsh Prince's negotiations were only meant to gain time. His answer was delayed till November 11th, by which date he had doubtless heard the news of an English defeat on the Menai Straits. There seems to have been no definite truce during the negotiations. So the Seneschal Luke de Tany was not taking any mean advantage over his opponents when, on November 6th, he led a force from Anglesey over the bridge of boats he had built across the Menai Straits, and began to reconnoitre the position of the enemy. His plans were laid without care, the Welsh repulsed him with loss, and when he fell back on his bridge, he found that the rising tide had cut him off from his means of retreat, and he was slain with the large majority of his followers.² Thus Edward's boast, that by occupying Anglesey he had knocked the finest feather out of Llewelyn's tail,³ proved to be premature. Carried away by this success, and backed up by his followers, the Prince refused the terms of peace, David also declaring that if he went on a Crusade, he would do so for the love of God and not to p'ea e the King of England.⁴ Peckham, who had shown a lack of tact throughout the negotiations, had to confess the uselessness of his intervention.

About December 7th, accompanied by only one faithful follower, Llewelyn slipped away to help his friends in central Wales. Joined by many bands, he faced the Marcher forces across the river Yrvon, a tributary of the Wye, and so secure did he feel that he left the command to other hands and retired to a place in the rear. The English, however, were shown a ford, by which they sent a detachment to take the Welsh from behind. Attacked on two sides, the Welsh resisted furiously, and the clang of battle attracting the attention of the Prince, he darted down to the assistance of his men, only to be killed before he reached them by a certain Stephen de

¹ *Peckham Letters*, 421-422, 465-468.

² Hemingburgh, u. 10-11; *Annales Lond.*, 90; *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 57.

³ Hemingburgh, u. 10.

⁴ *Peckham Letters*, 468-473.

Frankton, who had no idea of his victim's rank.¹ The Welsh, quite ignorant of their loss, fought on bravely, and it was, thanks only to the skilful combination of the archers and the cavalry that they were at last put to flight. Then, and not till then, was it discovered that Llewelyn had fallen. His head was cut off, and sent to the King, who had it paraded through the London streets crowned with ivy, and finally set up according to custom on the Bridge Gate there. Thus, say the chroniclers, was fulfilled the prophecy of the Welsh sorcerer, and Llewelyn wore a crown in the market place of London.²

The fall of Llewelyn was the death-blow to Welsh independence. He had struck the imagination of the Welsh and had managed to secure a far more united following than their divisions seemed to promise. Friend and foe looked on him as the mainstay of the resistance to the English, and wrote epitaphs upon him which vary in judgment, but unanimously gave him the position of importance that his talents merited. Though his brother David assumed his title, the issue of the struggle he kept up for six months was never in doubt. Edward, it is true, had his difficulties. His money ran out, and not content with the Thirtieth granted by the laity and a small sum from the clergy, he seized money collected for the Crusade, at the Temple—the most prominent monastic bank of the period. But David, at first safe in the fastnesses of Snowdon, saw his men desert him one by one, and he became a fugitive, hurrying from stronghold to stronghold until his last castle of Bere³ was captured by the Earl of Pembroke. Ultimately he was betrayed to the King by some of his own fellow-countrymen.⁴ In Edward's eyes his crimes were too serious to be pardoned by any submission, and the royal anger rings even through the formal language of the writ summoning the magnates to Shrewsbury to condemn the traitor.⁵ The magnates and citizens appeared on the appointed day (September 29th) and formally condemned the captured Prince. If Edward as usual showed no mercy, he did not swerve from his principles of justice.⁶

¹ The mere fact without details was conveyed to Edward in a letter from the English commander Roger L'Estrange. Printed in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xv 507.

² Hemingburgh, n. 11-13, *Annales Lond.*, 90; *Peckham Letters*, 477-478.

³ Rishanger, 104.

⁴ *Dunstable Annals*, 293

⁵ Foedera, 1. 630. Cf. Stubbs' *Charters*, 433, 467-468.

⁶ *Dunstable Annals*, 294.

Wales was now subdued. The few leaders who still held out quickly made their submission,¹ and the way was clear for the settlement of the country. By a proclamation issued from Rhuddlan on Mid Lent Sunday, 1284, English law was extended to the conquered districts, though such customs as were not hostile to the King's sense of right were allowed to remain. Sheriffs, coroners, and bailiffs were appointed to the four counties into which the district was now divided, Anglesey, Carnarvon, Merioneth, and Flint. Provision was also made for the appointment of sheriffs and other officials for the already formed counties of Cardigan and Carmarthen. The rest of Wales was left under the jurisdiction of the various Lords Marcher, who in the past had conquered the country, or who during the recent disturbances had been given franchises to facilitate its reduction. Thus Edward was compelled to allow the Marches still to remain the last home of feudalism pure and simple,² but so far as possible he brought the newly acquired districts under the direct control of his officials. The Welsh were now obliged to attend the Sheriff's Court and to follow the procedure of the English law courts. The existing law of inheritance, whereby all males succeeded in equal shares, was allowed to continue, though bastards were excluded in defiance of Welsh practice, while in default of male heirs, women were allowed to succeed.³ To ensure the peace of the country Edward built many fortresses, which were to act as centres of a new civilisation, and to which English burghers were induced to emigrate. The most important of these was Aberconway, from which he removed the Cistercian monks to Maenan, so as to facilitate the erection of the fortifications.⁴ Archbishop Peckham, meanwhile, busied himself over the reformation of the Church in Wales, and in a letter to the Bishops of St Asaph and Bangor in 1284 he gave an interesting, if perhaps biased, account of the social state of the country. The clergy, he declared, had given up the distinctive garb of their order, and by letting their hair grow had managed to hide all signs of their tonsures. Many of them defied the ecclesiastical regulation of celibacy, and their ignorance, due perhaps to the idleness which Peckham denounced as the chief Welsh characteristic, was such as

¹ Rishanger, 105.

² For the importance of the March in English history see Morris, *Welsh Wars*.

³ Statutes, i. 55-68.

⁴ Rishanger, 105.

to preclude even a passing acquaintance with Latin. The Archbishop urged the Bishops to induce their flocks to accept the inevitable, and to forget they belonged to a different race, abandoning the prophecies of Merlin and the dream of Welsh independence for the stricter worship of Christ.¹

The measures for the pacification of Wales had a good effect, but Welsh independence could not be crushed in a day. Two more risings, both planned with the usual Welsh cunning, disturbed the peace of the reign later, and on one occasion at least hampered the policy of the King. In 1287 Rhys-ap-Meredith, a chief who had supported Edward during his two earlier invasions, but who seemingly was now dissatisfied with his position, rose while Edward was abroad, captured the castles of Llandovery and Caercynan, and burnt the town of Swansea, ravaging the country up to Aberystwith. The Regent, Edmund of Cornwall, raised a huge army, and drove the insurgents back, finally capturing Rhys' castle of Dryslwyn, though with some loss owing to the collapse of a mine driven under the wall.² The rebellion was easily put down, though Rhys was not brought to justice for some years. The rising of 1294 was far more widespread and more serious. Not only did it show more unity and preparation, but the moment chosen was most auspicious. The King was on the eve of sailing for Gascony, the Marchers were angry with his attacks on their liberties, the Welsh were disgusted with English rule, so that Edward's position in Wales was threatened as severely as in the darkest days of 1282. There were three leaders of this rising: Madog, who claimed to be of the Welsh royal blood, burnt Carnarvon Castle and overran the country round, Maelgwn, who seized Cardigan and Carmarthen and harassed the district round Pembroke, and Morgan, who fell upon the Glamorganshire estates of the Earl of Gloucester. Though Edward's preparations were quickly made, and the forces destined for Gascony were transferred to Wales, not only were the King's brother Edmund and the Earl of Lincoln utterly defeated in attempting to relieve Denbigh, but the King himself was for a time in great peril at Conway Castle. In January a pitched battle won by the Earl of Warwick turned the tide, and Wales was steadily subdued. Edward showed himself merciful, and after restoring Carnarvon Castle and

¹ *Peckham Letters*, 731-736, 737-743.

² *Annales Cambriæ*, 109, Tretet, 315.

founding the new stronghold of Beaumaris, he left his subordinates to restore the country to complete peace.¹ Thus ended the troubles of Edward I in Wales. Henceforth the country was to be restive, a place from which rebellion might be expected, but the work of conquest was never entirely undone, and Wales was to rank as an integral part of the English King's dominions.²

¹ Hemingburgh, ii. 58-59; *Trevet*, 333, 335-336; *Cotton*, 253; *Rishanger*, 148; *Dunstable Annals*, 387.

² Excluding the "Marches" which were not incorporated until Tudor times.

CHAPTER III

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC AFFAIRS
(1275-1290)

WHILE the Welsh wars were being carried on Edward found time for an active foreign policy. He had cultivated foreign alliances, mainly directed against Charles of Anjou, whom he disliked as the protector of the De Montforts, and as his mother's foe. In opposition to a French candidate, he had supported the election of Rudolph of Hapsburg as Emperor, and had done his utmost to cement an alliance with him by the marriage of his daughter Joan of Acre to the Emperor's son Hartmann. Though this plan fell through, owing to Rudolph's preference for an Angevin alliance on the same lines, the Emperor had not gone so far as to prevent him mourning the death of his son in 1283 as an unhappy bar to the proposed English alliance¹. This was not Edward's only attempt to use his large family as a diplomatic weapon. In 1273 his eldest daughter was betrothed to the son of Peter of Aragon, only the untimely death of his son Alphonso in 1284 prevented the latter's marriage to Margaret, daughter of Florence Count of Holland, and his daughter Margaret was proposed in 1279 as the wife of John of Brabant's son.² These alliances were meant to strengthen his hands on the Continent, as was also his attempt to marry his son Henry to Joan, heiress of Navarre. Though this last project failed, as did so many of his marriage alliances, he secured Joan's mother Blanche for his brother Edmund, and thereby established him as co-regent of Champagne. In the early days of the reign friendly relations existed between England and France. When in 1279 the King's mother-in-law died, and Queen Eleanor and he journeyed to Fiance to establish their claims to Ponthieu, they had a friendly meeting with Philip at Amiens, where practically all the

¹ *Foedera*, i. 536, 545-557, 635.

² *Cal. of Patent Rolls* (1272-1281), 299

outstanding difficulties between the two Kings were settled. The Treaty of Paris of 1259 was ratified, the Agenais was handed over to Edward, and Eleanor was authorised to take possession of Ponthieu and Abbeville as her mother's heiress. The English King's commanding position was made manifest in 1284 by Philip of Savoy's request that he should name his rightful successor,¹ by the petition of Eric of Norway that he should renew the alliance made by Henry III.,² and by his mediation between the Dukes of Brabant and Guelders.³

Edward's efforts as a mediator, however, were not always successful, and he was being drawn into inevitable hostility to France owing to the growing ascendancy of his determined enemy, Charles of Anjou. It must have rejoiced his heart to hear in 1282 of the bloody "Sicilian Vespers" which expelled Charles from the island in favour of Peter of Aragon. Amid many protestations of affection Edward refused to act as umpire in a personal combat to which Charles then challenged his rival, and his refusal was backed up by the Pope, who urged him to do his utmost to stop this pseudo-chivalrous project. Edward had no desire to be drawn into the European quarrel, he therefore prudently preferred a progress through Norfolk and Suffolk to a continental journey with all its attendant complications.⁴

In 1286, however, Edward decided to visit his French dominions Gascony was disturbed, and homage was due to Philip IV., who had by then succeeded to the French throne. At Amiens he met his young suzerain, and accompanied him to Paris, where he did homage for his continental possessions on the basis of the existing treaties between the two countries.⁵ Though the good understanding went so far as to induce the French King to grant certain judicial immunities to his vassal,⁶ there was still an undercurrent of distrust, Philip expressing himself as dissatisfied with the form of homage.⁷ Peace between England and France was indeed no natural state of affairs during the Middle Ages. The French kings were striving to build up a strong centralised monarchy. The Duchy of Aquitaine was a great obstacle to French homogeneity, and

¹ *Foedera*, i. 641, 649.

² *Ibid.* i. 640, 645

³ *Ibid.* i. 643.

⁴ *Ibid.* i. 626-628, 652; Osney, 300-301.

⁵ *Foedera*, i. 665, 672-673

⁶ *Ibid.* i. 665.

⁷ *Lettres de Rois*, i. 342.

it was prized as a useful foothold on the Continent by the rulers of England. The formal language of official courtesy hides the human tendencies which underlay the negotiations and treaties between France and England, and, though the Hundred Years' War had not begun, the spirit that inspired it was ever present. Edward remained abroad for some considerable time, trying in vain to reconcile the rival claims of Angevin and Aragonese in Sicily; he even took the Cross once more, but it is hardly credible that he intended to leave Europe. He was soon reminded of his primary duty to his kingdom by the reports of disorders and maladministrations in his absence.

Edward had been absent more than three years when he landed at Dover on August 12th, 1289, and during that time the country had been getting more and more turbulent. A particularly bad case of insubordination was that of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, who had been asserting by force his claim to certain lands belonging to the Earl of Hereford. He had been ordered to desist before Edward's return, but to this the great Marcher had paid no attention, and had further complicated English policy not only by inducing the regent to refrain from dealing firmly with the rebellion of Rhys-ap-Meredith, but also, as was generally reported, by giving that rebel shelter on his Irish estates.¹ The King's method of reducing the Earl to order was original and characteristic. He compelled him to marry his daughter Joan, and to settle his estates on the issue of that union, or failing that, on the issue of Joan by any other husband, besides making ample provision for dower.² To both parties this marriage was more politic than pleasant,³ and moreover it was not sufficient to restrain Gloucester's turbulence or to assuage his quarrel with the Earl of Hereford, which had led to open private war. In October, 1291, the King went to Abergavenny in person, and enforced submission on the recalcitrant Earls. Both were imprisoned and fined, and the King's justice was vindicated.⁴

¹ Wykes, 311.

² *Dunstable Annals*, 358-359.

³ Joan had her revenge later, for on the death of Gloucester she married, to please herself, a simple knight, Ralph de Monthermer, whom after some opposition the King accepted as Earl of Gloucester and administrator of the De Clare estates. After his wife's death the title fell to his stepson, though he was summoned to Parliament as a baron.

⁴ Rot. Parl. 1. 70-77.

Private war and marcher independence were not the only abuses which Edward had to suppress, for in spite of the changes made in the officials earlier in the reign, the administration of justice was still very corrupt, and accusations of universal venality were brought against the King's ministers¹. A popular song of the period complains that the judges had raised corruption to a fine art, and even employed agents to secure from litigants promises of half the profit of cases should they be given in their favour. They were much too human, giving speedy justice to a beautiful lady nobly attired, but sending the poor unlovely woman away. The lesser officials had all to be bribed by those seeking justice, and the sheriffs oppressed rich and poor alike.² Complaints had become so loud as to reach the ear of the King, who summoned to Westminster all those who complained of judicial oppression,³ and as a result appointed a commission to try the offenders. Two only were acquitted, the rest were all removed from office and heavily fined, even chief justices like Ralph Hengham and Thomas Weyland failing to escape.⁴ In justice to the condemned it must be remembered that they were given very small salaries, and were greatly tempted to use their position for the increase of their slender incomes. Moreover, the great increase in litigation during this reign seems to imply a confidence in the judges as a rule, and in all probability much that would now be termed ill-gotten was then regarded as legitimate perquisites, and would have been ignored by most other kings of the times less enamoured of justice.⁵

Having reorganised the Bench, Edward next proceeded to listen to other complaints. The Jews had been growing in unpopularity in England of late, partly owing to religious bigotry, partly to economic reasons. As they could find no place in a feudal organisation of society owing to their inability to take a Christian oath, they had no legal rights and were the King's chattels, entirely at his mercy, and Edward's hatred of all kinds of unorthodoxy had

¹ *Dunstable Annals*, 355.

² Political Songs (Camden Soc.), 224-230. Cf. 232.

³ Foedera, I. 715.

⁴ Wykes, 319-322, *Dunstable Annals*, 355-357; *Annales Lond.*, 97-98. Cf. *Peckham Letters*, 968. Probably a good many guiltless people were removed.

⁵ The trials of the accused officials have been published in *State Trials* (1289-1293), ed. by Prof. Tout and Hilda Johnson (Royal Hist. Soc., 1906). The worst accusations recorded by the chroniclers do not generally appear in the official indictments.

led him to show little sympathy for these outlaws under his protection. An attempt was made to convert the Jew to Christianity, but the convert's prospects were not tempting, for his whole property reverted to the King, and he was therefore obliged to enter the home for converted Jews, which stood just outside the liberties of London. Here, by the King's bounty, he was allowed to enjoy a portion of his property as administered by the Warden of the home.¹ In addition to this religious persecution Edward's reign witnessed an economic attack on the Jews in England. Their main source of income arose from the lending of money, and since usury had been forbidden, as hostile to the spirit of the Christian theology, it was more than could be expected of human nature to allow a body of men to profit by their immunity from the restrictions of the prevalent faith. So in 1275 the King, in spite of the wealth that he derived from them, forbade the Jews to lend money on usury, bidding them earn their living as Christians did.² Thus was the Jew deprived of his only source of income. He could not be expected to change his nature, and take to agriculture, even if the obligation on him to live in certain appointed "Jewries" had not precluded this, while he was debarred from becoming a merchant or a craftsman as the guild organisation, so closely connected with the Church, dominated both these activities. His only means of earning a livelihood was gone. It was therefore natural that he should take to clipping the coin, an easy process when the only English coin was a penny, which, to produce smaller units, was broken roughly into two or four halfpence or farthings, easily reducible in size by judicious paring. The example set by the Jew was soon followed by the Christian, and frequent arrests for clipping are recorded after the issue of the ordinance of 1275. At Christmas, 1278, Christians and Jews were arrested wholesale. The Christians, with three exceptions, escaped with the payment of large fines, but the Jews were denied the right, confirmed by Edward himself, of being tried by their own justices, and between 280 and 300 of them were executed in London alone, besides many more in other parts of England.³ This wholesale prosecution was followed

¹ Cal. of Patent Rolls (1272-1281), 371-372. ² Statutes, i 221-222, Wykes, 266

³ *Dunstable Annals*, 279, 281; *French Chron. of Lond.*, 15-16, *Annales Lond.*, 88, Wykes, 279. Wykes declares that the lawfulness of the proceedings against the Jews was very doubtful.

by a reform of the coinage, new pennies of superior execution taking the place of the old issues, while round halfpence and farthings were now coined for the first time. At length, influenced probably by his mother¹ and by an access of religious zeal which had seized him on taking the Cross once more while abroad,² Edward issued an edict ordering all Jews to leave England by All Saints' Day, 1290, on the plea that the usury law had been evaded. The Jews were to be allowed to take their personal chattles with them, but their other property was to be forfeited to the Crown.³ A persistent tradition declares that the edict was never carried out to the letter, but there is no evidence that any considerable number of Jews braved the threat of execution if found within the kingdom after November 1st. Some never reached a place of safety; there is a horrid story of a party of London Jews who were disembarked on a sandbank by the captain of the ship they had chartered, and left to be drowned, with the advice to call on Moses to deliver them.⁴ It is some comfort to know that the ruffianly captain and his associates were punished for this base act of treachery.⁵

Though the King lost a fruitful source of income when the Jews left England, he had another to fall back upon to pay for the wars that he undertook. The Italian merchants were the most prominent traders of the age, and for many years they had been doing business in England. Coming originally as buyers of wool and also as conveyors of money from England to the Papal Curia, they stayed as moneylenders, and were found very useful by the King when he needed ready cash, especially as a tax granted by Parliament took some time to collect. Though Edward was indebted from the earliest days of his reign to the Lombards, as these Italians were generally called, he never seems to have paid any interest⁶—

¹ She had expelled all Jews from her dowry-towns (Calendar of Patent Rolls (1272-1281), 76).

² Marked by the immediate expulsion of the Jews from Gascony (Trevet, 314).

³ Select Pleas of the Exchequer of the Jews (Selden Soc., 1902), pp. xl-xli.

⁴ Hemingburgh, ii. 21.

⁵ *Dunstable Annals*, 362. Hemingburgh states the contrary. On the whole subject of the Jews in England and their expulsion see A. M. Hyamson, *A History of the Jews in England* (London, 1908), and *The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290*, by B. L. Abrahams (Oxford, 1895).

⁶ Doubtless this was why he constantly forbade them to lend money at usury (Cal of Patent Rolls (1272-1281), 91, 228, 428).

usury was forbidden by the Church—but the wily lenders gained rights over the customs and other revenues of the Crown to secure their principal,¹ as well as other privileges in return for their loans to the King. Certain merchants of Lucca for instance were allowed to bring cloth into the country and sell it, though it did not comply with the recent regulations as to size and quality.² Such privileges helped to make the Lombard merchant very unpopular, and again and again he was attacked, whether unlawfully by assault in the London streets, or in more constitutional guise by petition in Parliament. He was, however, far too valuable an asset to be left without the royal protection, for not even London, that great producer of royal loans, could raise a sum of money with the ease and despatch of these early bankers, and more and more did English kings come to depend on anticipations of their revenue, though they lost considerably by this improvident method.

With the summary justice meted out to his defaulting officials, and the expulsion of the Jews, we come to the parting of the ways in Edward's reign, and the parting is marked by the death of his first wife on November 28th, 1290. She had been the best friend he ever had, a woman who won her way to the hearts of his subjects, because she was ever ready to listen to the cry of the oppressed, and this in spite of her early unpopularity due to her costly marriage and the foreign retinue that accompanied her to England. To no earlier queen does a chronicler give a finer character for piety, mercy, and modesty than Rishanger does to Eleanor of Castile.³ Her husband mourned her sincerely, and the crosses raised to her memory along the route of her funeral procession from Harby in Nottinghamshire to Westminster, testified to the depth of his feeling.⁴ In the following year the queen-mother followed her daughter-in-law to the grave, and other notable deaths occurred about this period, for the Treasurer, John Kirkby, the Chancellor, Robert Burnell, and Archbishop Peckham all passed away between 1290 and 1292. With the advent of new associates new problems assailed the King. His greatest work was done,

¹ Cal. of Patent Rolls (1272-1281), 101, 149, 172, 338, 355, etc

² *Ibid.*, 356

³ Rishanger, 120-121.

⁴ For the identification of Harby as the place of Eleanor's death, see Mr W. H. Stevenson's note in the *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, iii 315-318.

his legal reforms had been accomplished, and Wales had been incorporated with his English dominions, but the more difficult problems of his reign—the Scottish succession troubles and the final breach with France—had still to be faced, and faced without the sympathetic assistance of his wife and the sagacious statesmanship of Robert Burnell.

CHAPTER IV

THE SCOTTISH SUCCESSION AND COMPLICATIONS WITH FRANCE
(1286-1304)

EVER an opportunist in the best sense of the word, Edward, when events played into his hands, seldom failed to make the most of his opportunity. This is true of all his policy, but most of all of his dealings with Scotland. There his opportunity had come in 1286, when Alexander III. died from a fall from his horse, leaving no successor save an infant granddaughter, the offspring of his daughter Margaret and Eric of Norway. The succession of this child was a matter of considerable anxiety to the Scots, and in view of the good relations which had existed between Alexander and his brother-in-law, the nobles, who had assembled for the funeral at Dunfermline, sent two Dominican Friars to Edward, asking for his favour and advice.¹ The King had sailed for France, and it was in Gascony that he received the messengers, and advised the appointment of a regency, already doubtless conscious of the opportunity which offered of uniting the thrones of England and Scotland. Within a year he had obtained a general dispensation from the Pope to marry any of his children within the prohibited degrees,² which suggests that he was already contemplating a marriage of his son to his grand-niece, the new Queen of Scotland. Nevertheless, he moved warily, and it was not till he was about to return to England that Eric of Norway sent him envoys with plenary powers to discuss matters relative to his daughter, and not till November that certain English and Scottish representatives met in conference at Salisbury. From the treaty drawn up there it seems that there was some doubt whether the Maid of Norway, as she came to be called, would be well received

¹ *Documents of Scottish History*, i. 4-5, Edinburgh, ii 30-31.

² *Documents of Scottish History*, i. 35-36.

in Scotland. As a precautionary measure she was to be sent to England, and there kept till Edward should consider it safe for her to enter her kingdom. With regard to her marriage nothing definite was settled: indeed if the treaty were read merely as an official record, and not treated as a human document, it might be thought that all parties concerned desired that she should die unwed. Eric was to hand her over to Edward free from any contract of marriage, and he in turn was to transfer her to Scotland equally free, while on their part the Scots guaranteed that they would marry her to no one without the consent of the King of England.¹ Having obtained a special dispensation from the Pope for his son to marry Margaret, Edward set his seal to conditions agreed upon at Brigham, on July 18th, 1290, promising that the two kingdoms, even if they were under the same ruler, should be kept entirely separate, and that the Scottish throne should be free from all subjection to that of England, the privileges of neither being diminished nor increased. No Parliament was to discuss Scottish affairs if called outside the northern kingdom, and no Scottish subject was to be compelled to plead in any court not held in his own country.²

Everything seemed plain sailing, and Edward might well think a troublesome neighbour was to be brought under his direct influence. A ship stored with all manner of necessaries and luxuries was sent to Norway to convey the Maid to England,³ but she proved too frail to stand the voyage. Seized with illness, she was put ashore at the Orkneys in the hope of saving her life, but in vain. Her death had a momentous effect both on Scottish and English history. Edward's plans were upset. The possible aspirants to the Scottish throne were legion, but of the numerous claims put in only three could be considered as serious.⁴ These all descended from David Earl of Huntingdon, the brother of William the Lion, who had died in 1214. John Balliol represented the elder line, but Robert Bruce stood one generation nearer to the parent stock, while John Hastings, descended from the youngest of

¹ *Documents of Scottish History*, i. 105-111.

² *Ibid.* i. 162-173.

³ Cal. of Patent Rolls (1281-1292), 386-387.

⁴ Many claims existed, based on descent from William the Lion and Alexander II., through illegitimate lines. Florence, Count of Holland, claimed through Ada, sister of William the Lion, and later Eric of Norway put in a claim as heir to his daughter Margaret.

David's three daughters, had by far the weakest of the three claims. In fact, the struggle for the kingship was to lie between Balliol and Bruce, and between them alone. Without a moment's hesitation both parties appealed to Edward, thus obviating any necessity for the English King to interfere on his own initiative. The death of Margae't was but a rumour when the Bishop of St. Andrew^s, evidently in the interests of Balliol, urged Edward to appear on the borderland to preserve peace, as Bruce was already in arms.¹ On the other hand, Bruce wrote to Edward asserting his claim to the throne, both by hereditary right and by judgment of the Great Council during the late King's reign, and declaring that there was a conspiracy on foot to give it to Balliol.² The opening thus offered was eagerly seized, and from the very first Edward showed that he meant to assert his authority over Scotland. He ordered researches to be made in all the chief monasteries in England to prove his feudal superiority over the neighbouring kingdom, for it had become the custom to send copies of all important State documents to religious houses, which explains the appearance of official records in the pages of so many of the monkish chroniclers. It was, no secret in England that he had the definite intention of subduing Scotland to his will,³ when he summoned the claimants to appear before him at Norham, at the same time promising that the appearance of Scottish suitors on English soil should not be taken as a precedent.⁴

When on May 10th the proceedings were opened, the King was supported by many bishops, clerks learned in the civil and canon law, and monks with their chronicles, ready to substantiate all claims that Edward might make over Scotland.⁵ To the assembled Scottish magnates Roger de Brabazon, a justice—and later Chief Justice—of the King's Bench, delivered the inaugural address in the name of the King. As a preliminary to the trial the claimants were told that they must acknowledge Edward as overlord. This was no new claim, but the exact relationship between the two crowns was a fruitful field of controversy for the lawyers. What-

¹ *Foedera*, i. 741.

² Palgrave, *Documents*, 17-21. The date and authenticity of this document have been impugned.

³ *Annals of Worcester*, 504.

⁴ *Documents of Scottish History*, i. 228.

⁵ Hemingburgh, ii. 32.

ever the claims over Scotland put forward by early English kings, it was undisputed that William the Lion had done homage to Henry II. in 1175, and Edward seems to have taken this as the basis of his claim, disregarding Richard I's renunciation in 1189. The exact limit of this renunciation was a question open to endless argument. The Scots maintained that the homage of their King was now paid for his English estates in England, notably the Earldom of Huntingdon, but, if Alexander III. in 1274 had made such conditional homage, in 1278 he certainly agreed to repeat his oath without any such limitation, though without any explicit mention of Scotland. Now, however, the matter was brought to a head by the demand of Edward's representative that superiority should be acknowledged.¹ The claimants, given a day to think the matter over, asked for longer time, but though Edward granted this request, he showed that he had decided to enforce his claims. He was satisfied as to the strict legality of his claim, and like a true lawyer did not hesitate to take advantage of his opponents' weakness, to press a demand at a time when it could not well be rejected. Nor were the claimants likely to have very fine feelings with regard to Scottish independence. Both Bruce and Balliol were as much English barons as Scottish princes. Balliol was lord of Barnard Castle in Durham, and possessed extensive estates in Hertfordshire and Northampton; Bruce held ten Knights' fees in England, so both owed homage to Edward apart from any Scottish affair. Bruce, too, who had been sometime Chief Justice of the King's Bench, must have been lawyer enough to appreciate the legal points. On the appointed day the claimants returned and took the required oath, thus placing themselves in Edward's power and paving the way for the future war, since they recognised the English King as Sovereign Lord of Scotland, and thereby entitled to decide the disputed succession.² Entire possession of Scotland with the seizin of all lands and castles and the appointment of officials was temporarily ceded to Edward, who reappointed the guardians of Scotland, but named one of his own clerks, Walter of Amundesham, to co-

¹ Sir James Ramsay, *The Dawn of the Constitution*, 382, notices a discrepancy between the official account in the Foedera and the other records. In the Foedera the claim is to be "directus dominus" of Scotland, whereas in the other records it is to be "dominus supremus" only.

² *Annales Regni Scotiae*, 234-235.

operate with the Scottish Chancellor. A council of 104 members was set up to try the great Cause, forty being chosen by Bruce and his friends, forty by Balliol, his kinsman Comyn and their party, and twenty-four, mostly well-known councillors of the King, by Edward himself. By August, 1291, all was ready; the Scottish magnates had sworn homage, the castles and lands had been handed over to Edward, the arbitiators had been appointed, but the hearing of the various claimants was postponed till the following June, possibly to enable them to prepare their cases more carefully. When the conference reassembled at Berwick-on-Tweed, some time was spent in deciding the laws and customs which governed the succession, and it was not till October 14th that the various claims were examined in detail. The long and complicated pleadings show with what care Edward observed legal forms and ceremonies. Ultimately when Balliol emerged triumphant from the attacks of all other competitors, there still remained a knotty question. Hastings put in a plea for the equal division of the inheritance among the three heirs of David, on the ground that, by feudal law, in the absence of male heirs all daughters shared alike, but on November 17th final judgment was delivered in favour of indivisibility, and nothing remained but to carry through the formalities of placing Balliol upon the throne. Edward at once handed over the seizin of the kingdom of Scotland and the castles which were in his hands to the new King, the seal temporarily used by the guardians during the interregnum was broken, and in return Balliol did homage to his overlord, definitely stating that he held the throne from him, and attesting this by a formal document sealed with his private seal and those of the chief Scottish magnates. After his coronation this homage was repeated at Newcastle-upon-Tyne.¹

Thus had Edward with conspicuous ability accomplished the most important piece of arbitration that he had undertaken. In the light of subsequent events it is almost impossible to believe that he had not already decided on his later course of conduct. The care with which he left no loophole for an escape from his overlordship

¹ The whole case from beginning to end is preserved in two copies varying slightly in detail. They are printed in *Foedera*, i 762-784, and at the end of Rishanger's Chronicle in the Rolls Series under the title, *Annales Regni Scotiae*, 234-368. Both were written by or under the direction of Jean Eustre of Caen, a papal notary, who seems to have been the official recorder of the proceedings.

suggests that he had decided to secure, through the strict enforcement of feudal law, that control over the neighbouring kingdom which he had promised himself when his son was betrothed to the Maid of Norway. He had incorporated Wales by this method, and it seems but natural that he intended to follow the same policy with regard to Scotland. Despite his outwardly correct attitude, his real intentions had peeped through the mask. Edward's arbitration was just and legal, for once the terms were synonymous, but where equity and technical legality came into conflict there was no moment's doubt as to which course he would pursue.

While Scotland was thus occupying the King's attention, trouble was brewing with France. Philip the Fair was looking for an opportunity to put pressure on his too powerful vassal, and seeking a way to retaliate on him for his attempt to isolate France by a system of continental alliances. If Edward's policy was but a repetition of that inaugurated by Henry II., Philip also refurbished the defensive weapons used by his predecessors. In picking a quarrel with England the French King was assisted by the growing enmity between the various groups of sailors trading in the English Channel. The trade of Northern Europe was expanding, and commercial rivalry was increasing. The shipmen of the Cinque Ports and of Yarmouth had joined in a private war between the men of Bayonne and their Flemish rivals, in which the latter lost a large number of ships burnt or captured. The inevitable result was the expulsion of all English and Gascon sailors from Flanders, and English retaliation in seizing the ships and goods of all Flemings in England. but the trouble was not serious and peace was soon restored. The Norman sailors now helped to complicate these commercial troubles, and while Edward was busy in the North, they fell upon Dover, pillaging and burning a large part of the town. It was these Normans who gave Philip his opportunity to call Edward to account. While the Earl of Lincoln was complaining at Paris of French attacks on English shipping, the quarrel between the French and English sailors flared up owing to the murder of a Cinque Port sailor, who had landed on the Norman coast to draw water. At once a miniature naval war broke out, the details of which are hard to unravel owing to the bias of those who chronicle the events. The Normans sailed up and down the Channel vowed death to all English sailors, two of whom they captured and hanged at the

yard-arm The English made reprisals by falling upon Sluys, sinking several ships and carrying off six as prizes In the end a regular engagement was fought off Saint-Mahé on May 15th, 1293, between the English, supported by the Gascon, Irish, and Dutch sailors, and the Normans, assisted by men from other French ports, and even from Genoa. The fight took place during a heavy storm, which according to one account enabled the Normans to take their enemy at a disadvantage, but the victory lay with the English.

Philip promptly complained, and sent an embassy to England, demanding restitution and compensation, if matters affecting Gascony, then pending in France, were to be settled in a way satisfactory to Edward. The English King was quite ready to discuss the matter, especially as the outrageous behaviour of some Norfolk sailors to the Count of Holland's men might lead him to think that all the blame was not on the French side. He forbade his seamen to molest the subjects of the King of France, and suggested that those who had complained to the French King should come and lodge their complaints before the Courts at Westminster, as there they would get speedy justice. He even promised that if this solution did not find favour, he would meet Philip at some frontier town and there discuss a settlement, or allow the matter to go to arbitration. A settlement was the last thing that Philip wanted ; he wished to treat the matter not as between two equal princes, but as between lord and vassal, so he summoned Edward as Duke of Aquitaine to appear before him at Paris. The attack was more subtle than probably even Philip knew. Edward was already embarked upon the policy of compelling the King of Scotland to answer the appeals of his subjects at Westminster, and stickler for the details of feudal law as overlord, he could hardly ignore his obligations as vassal, and refuse to appear on a similar summons at Paris.

To gain time Edward commissioned his brother Edmund of Lancaster to induce his French overlord to withdraw the citation, but Philip was obdurate, and repeated the summons in a letter which detailed the complaints at some length and with great heat

¹ Hemingburgh, ii. 40-42 ; Cotton, 227 ; Florence of Worcester, Contin , ii. 267-268, *Annales Lond* , 101 *Lettres de Rois*, i 392-400. The chroniclers give various estimates, all obviously largely inflated, of the number of French ships captured, Rishanger (p. 137) declares that 15,000 French were killed.

At length it was agreed that Edward was to make formal submission, delivering over hostages and certain border fortresses for forty days, after which at a personal interview with the French King he would receive all back. On the receipt of his brother's authorisation to surrender the fortresses, and Philip's verbal ratification of the terms, Edmund on February 3rd, 1294, ordered the King's Seneschal in Gascony to admit the French. Anxious at the number of soldiers poured into Gascony, Edmund made yet another appeal to Philip, but was told to wait till the forty days were accomplished. But at the end of that time the King of France professed his inability to rescind the judgment of the Parlement de Paris without the consent of his council. In other words, the treaty under which the fortresses had been resigned was waste paper, the citation held good, and, as it had not been obeyed, the Duchy of Aquitaine was forfeit to the French throne. Aghast at such a cynical disregard of political faith, and fearful of his safety, Edmund fled to England to confess his failure to his brother, a failure for which he has been much blamed, though he seems to have taken adequate precautions, and to have been outwitted not by diplomacy but by sheer fraud¹.

War was now inevitable. To renewed citations to appear at Paris Edward replied by sending two friars to renounce his homage to his overlord, and prepared to defend his rights. The force collected for an immediate attack upon Gascony was necessarily small, owing to Madog's Welsh rising, which compelled an expedition to the West led by the King in person. After many delays John of Brittany and John St. John brought their little army safely to the mouth of the river Garonne. Wherever the English forces went they were welcomed and admitted by the Gascons, though in some cases the French garrisons had to be besieged in the castles. Bordeaux, too strong to be attacked, was passed by, the troops landing higher up the river at Rions. Here the army was increased by Gascon recruits, and John of Brittany felt himself strong enough to send off St. John to retake Bayonne, where the citizens, hearing of his approach, rose against the French, driving them into the citadel till the arrival of the English compelled their sur-

¹ Hemingburgh, ii. 43-45, *Trevet*, 327-331, Edmund's own account of the negotiations is to be found in *Fœdera*, i. 794. For the French point of view see E. Boutaric, *La France sous Philippe le Bel*, and Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, III. n. 296-297.

render All went in favour of Edward's forces till the spring, when Charles of Valois came to the rescue of the remaining French garrisons. The tables were then turned, dissensions in the English camp produced a mutiny, and many of the recovered districts fell back into French hands. When in the late summer a truce was made, the region round Bayonne alone remained in English occupation.

At home the King's needs drove him to all manner of extortions, for he needed vast sums to buy the assistance of continental princes against France. True to his old policy, Edward was trying to build up a coalition against his enemy. He enlisted Guy, Count of Flanders, and other princes of the Low Countries, including his own son-in-law the Duke of Brabant, and the Count of Holland. Above all, English subsidies won over Adolf of Nassau, the new Emperor, since he wanted to win the kingdom of Arles from France. Thus Edward built up a Teutonic federation to press France on the East, while his own forces invaded Gascony on the West.¹ Philip meantime was collecting allies, so that a great European war seemed inevitable. This catastrophe Pope Celestine V had done his best to avert, and his successor Boniface VIII had been barely installed when he sent off messengers to Edward urging peace. The King, whose forces were not ready, and who had no desire for a French war, agreed to a truce. It did him little good, for the diplomacy of the French King sapped his alliances. The Emperor, who had declared so loudly that he would invade France, was bought off by French gold,² the Counts of Flanders and Holland were persuaded to change sides. Above all, Philip set himself to build up an alliance with the Scots. Balliol was dazzled with the prospect of a French princess as wife for his son Edward, while the Flemings were ordered to continue to trade with Scotland, though England was boycotted. Philip was confident that his enemy was powerless. His agent in London, Thomas Turberville, whom he had captured in Gascony and set at liberty to act as his spy in England, reported that Edward was threatened

¹ For the details of this policy see Paul Fournier, *Le Royaume d'Arles et de Vienne* (1891).

² For a discussion of the problem whether Philip IV. succeeded in bribing Adolf to desert his allies see *Analekten zur Geschichte des 13 und 14 Jahrhunderts*, by Dr. Fritz Kern (Sonderabdruck aus den *Mittheilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, XXX).

by great difficulties. The Scots were expected to rise in rebellion, and if they did so the Welsh would follow suit¹. Edward was truly sore beset. He was surrounded by actual or potential enemies, his diplomacy was undermined, the English coast was open to attack, Dover being once more burnt, and Winchelsea saved only in the nick of time, and there was but small satisfaction in the reprisals of the English sailors.

Of all the dangers, that from Scotland seemed to Edward the greatest. He would not resign his rights over Gascony, but he was far more determined to maintain his hold over John Balliol. When homage was sworn for Scotland, Edward interpreted the act quite differently to the Scots. He knew the strict legal rights with which it endowed him, and he intended to make full use of them. Thus, when in 1292 Roger Bartholomew, a burgess of Berwick, appealed from the judgment of the Scottish Courts to the English overlord, an example followed next year by Macduff, Earl of Fife, Edward accepted the appeals, which began to flow across the Border, and explained to Balliol that he must answer them in person. The King of Scots attended the English Parliament in October, 1293, but his refusal to answer any appeals without the advice of his Council was declared a gross contempt of Court. At length in October, 1295, compelled by his magnates to take up a more definite attitude, he signed an alliance with France against England, which was cemented by a final treaty of marriage between his son and the daughter of Charles of Valois.² Thus Edward had raised an opposition in Scotland which he by no means understood. Though in his eyes overlordship entailed the hearing of appeals against the vassal, this was really a development of feudal theory which had taken place since the days when Scotland last acknowledged the suzerainty of England, and was not palatable to the magnates of the northern kingdom. To do Edward justice, it must be remembered that the appeals had come spontaneously from men of Scottish blood, and had been in no way suggested by him. The national feeling of Scotland was not yet born. It was to be brought into existence by Edward's later actions.

¹ His letter is in Cotton, 304-306. His treachery was discovered and he was executed shortly afterwards (Cotton, 306, Hemingburgh, n. 60-63).

² Foedera, 1. 830, 831.

Things looked very black for England in the early days of 1296. Anxious to concentrate his attention on Scotland, the King listened with ill-concealed eagerness to suggestions of mediation with France, even urging his old ally the Emperor to take part in negotiations for a truce.¹ Still reinforcements under Edmund of Lancaster were sent to Gascony, but hostilities were carried on with no great vigour on either side, though on the whole the English lost ground. When Lancaster died at Bayonne during the year, he was succeeded in the command by the Earl of Lincoln, Edward's trusted and valued servant in the past,² but Lincoln could not expect much support from home, as Edward wanted all the men he could get for an invasion of Scotland. By March 1st an English army was gathered at Newcastle under the banner of St. John of Beverley, and on March 5th the King led it to the frontier. The Scots were already actively in the field, and cut up a small advance guard, sent to prevent Robert de Roos from betraying his castle of Wark to the enemy. It was now possible for Edward to claim that his enemies had been the aggressors, and had invaded England before ever he had crossed the frontier. On March 28th the English forces passed the Tweed and advanced on Berwick, which met a summons to surrender with insult. The Scots seem to have belittled the military prowess of the English, for when the attack was sounded they were struck with amazement at the ease with which their meagre fortifications were passed, and hardly struck a blow in defence. The only resistance of note was offered by a band of Flemings in their trade depot, the Red Hall, and here the only recorded English casualty occurred, Robert of Almaine being struck down by an arrow. Large numbers of the townsmen were slain, though the women were spared, and the garrison of the castle was allowed to march out with the honours of war.³ At Berwick the King stayed for about a month, having established communication with the fleet, which he had ordered to co-operate with his land forces, much in the same way as it had done in the Welsh wars. The time was spent in refitting the place. It was useless for the Scots to try and make a diversion into England, and ravaged the country up to Hexham, for the English

¹ *Foedera*, i. 834-835.

² *Hemingburgh*, ii. 74-75; *Rishanger*, 154-155.

³ The Captain, Sir William Douglas, was retained as a traitor, since he had sworn homage to Edward in 1291.

communications were assured by the fleet. More serious operations followed when Edward, hearing that a body of Scots had been admitted into Dunbar by the Countess of March, though her husband was with the invading army, sent Earl Warenne forward to lay siege to it. The Scots advanced to the relief of the castle, thinking to take the besiegers at a disadvantage, but when Warenne drew off his men to meet the advance of the relieving force, the undisciplined Scots, thinking him in retreat, rushed forward in broken array, and gave him the opportunity to defeat them with loss, and drive them back as far as the forest of Selkirk. The battle of Dunbar, in itself little more than a skirmish, broke the back of Scottish resistance. At its best that resistance had only represented a section of the Scottish baronage, as many of the magnates, including the Earl of Mar, the Earl of Angus, and the two Bruces had joined Edward's army¹. There are signs, too, that on the day of battle many who had supported the claims of Bruce preferred not to fight too enthusiastically in support of Balliol. Under these circumstances, it is natural that all opposition disappeared after the first defeat, especially as King John was no hero to inspire his followers to renewed efforts. Roxburgh surrendered when Edward appeared before it on May 8th, Edinburgh showed some slight resistance, but was subdued by siege engines. Here reinforcements came up in the form of Welsh infantry, especially long-bowmen, a welcome addition, as the shortage of men had been such that from Berwick appeals had been sent out to criminals and vagrants to join the English army.²

From Edinburgh, Edward went to Perth by way of Stirling, where only the porter was left to surrender the castle, and thence made a triumphal procession through the eastern Highlands. By August 22nd he was back at Berwick, having "conquered the realm of Scotland and searched it in twenty-one weeks and no more"³. Meanwhile, Balliol had made his submission. He had sent messengers to Edward, who received them while celebrating the Feast of St. John Baptist at Perth, and early in July he had set his seal to official

¹ Hemingburgh, ii. 110-112, gives the official document of this renewed homage. The two Bruces were Robert, Lord of Annandale, and his son Robert, Earl of Carrick. The claimant Bruce was now dead.

² *Documents of Scottish History*, ii. 38-39.

³ *Ibid.*, ii. 25-32 (a fourteenth-century itinerary of the campaign), Hemingburgh ii. 105-106; Rishanger, 160, 161.

documents, in which he renounced the alliance made with France and surrendered his crown to the overlord whom he had defied. He was sent to England, and there kept in honourable confinement at Hertford, receiving a suitable retinue and even owning a small hunting establishment. At Berwick those who had not already made their submission were admitted to the King's peace, Edward being regarded not as King of the Scots but as King of England, so that now Scotland, like Wales, was incorporated in the English title. Though some attempt was made to extend English taxation to Scotland, little else was altered Englishmen were placed in the chief official posts, John de Warenne as Guardian, Hugh de Cressingham as Treasurer, and William de Oimesby as Justiciar, but otherwise no particular precautions were taken against a Scottish rising, save that certain magnates were for a time at least to dwell on the southern side of the Tweed.¹

Nevertheless, Scotland was not conquered. In less than a year the country was in open rebellion under the leadership of the far-famed William Wallace. Of gentle though not of noble blood,² Wallace is said to have spent a turbulent youth, and according to hostile chroniclers to have been little better than a common freebooter, who magnified a private quarrel into a great patriotic movement against the English rule. Having murdered the Sheriff of Lanark in a particularly brutal manner, he raised the standard of rebellion against all English officials, and was soon the leader of a no inconsiderable army. Sir William Douglas threw in his lot with the rebels, who were supported by some few Scottish nobles, notably Robert Bruce, Lord of Carrick, grandson of the original Bruce claimant, who was said to have designs on the throne. The cause of the rising was very similar to that which had prompted the rebellion of David in Wales. The English officials had been careless and unwise. The Earl of Surrey, though only four years the King's senior, was too old a man to undertake the government of a half-conquered and turbulent people, and made the climate an excuse for spending most of his

¹ Edward brought back from Edinburgh Castle the royal jewels, which were deposited in the King's wardrobe at the Palace of Westminster, and from Scone the hallowed Stone, which he presented to Westminster Abbey, to be ultimately incorporated in the coronation chair (Hemingburgh, II. 108-109; Bain, *Cal. of Scottish Documents*, II. 221-222).

² According to the *Annales Angliae et Scotiae* (p. 383) Wallace was of very humble origin, but this was the biased statement of an enemy.

time in England. Cressingham the Treasurer was a pompous and licentious ecclesiastic, particularly unpopular because it was his duty to levy taxes; the Justiciar Ormesby, well meaning perhaps but with the failings of his profession, looked at matters from the purely legal point of view and harassed rather than subdued the restless men he had to govern.¹ By May, 1297, the English power was everywhere threatened in Scotland. Edward refused to take the danger seriously, and so intent was he on an expedition to Flanders that the subjugation of Scotland was confided to his representatives. The Earl of Surrey was confirmed in his guardianship, and Cressingham was ordered to find money for the subjugation of the rebels. The Sheriffs of the northern counties were bidden to provide troops. Some of the Scottish baronage who were detained in England, including John Comyn of Badenoch, Balliol's nephew, were sent home to help in the restoration of order, but this only tended to intensify resistance. The rising had sprung from the middle classes, and not from the hereditary leaders of the nation, and it was strengthened by a belief that Scots were to be impressed for service in foreign parts. When the northern levies entered Scotland there followed the submission of those nobles who had championed Wallace. The Bishop of Glasgow declared his penitence for having renounced his allegiance, and even Sir William Douglas surrendered, though to his intense indignation he was not given his liberty but was kept in irons at Berwick Castle. Cressingham warned his royal master to put little faith in the apparent collapse of the rebellion, since Wallace was still at large and defiant, in Selkirk forest, and the pacification extended only as far as the Forth. Yet Edward seems to have been content. Obsessed as he was with one idea, his foreign policy, it needed a sharp reverse to convince him that the Scottish problem needed his whole attention.

Such a reverse was quickly forthcoming. While his master was setting out for Flanders, Surrey undertook the subjugation of the Scots still in arms north of the Forth. The two forces came into touch when the English reached Stirling, the Scots being encamped on the hills on the opposite side of the river Forth, which was spanned by a long narrow bridge, only just wide enough to let two horsemen pass each other. Surrey had had some military experi-

¹ Hemingburgh, II. 127-128

ence in the baronial wars of Henry III.'s reign, but he remained the typical feudal magnate, to whom a battle was a glorified tournament. On the morning of September 11th he slept late, and his men though eager for battle dared not wake him. When at last he did appear, he refused all advice, and determined to cross the bridge and attack Wallace. In vain a Scottish knight pointed out a ford close by where at least forty men could cross abreast,¹ and equally in vain he offered to lead a detachment by this way so as to create a diversion, and enable the main body to negotiate the narrow bridge in safety. Surrey, urged on by Cressingham, ordered the advance. Wallace, from his point of vantage on the hill hard by the Abbey of Cambuskenneth, waited until the advance guard, under Sir Maimaduke Twenge, had crossed over, and then dashed down with his men, seized the bridge head and annihilated the English force on his side of the river. Twenge, with superhuman valour, fought his way back across the bridge, bearing his wounded nephew with him, another knight with great difficulty swam his horse across the river despite its armour and his own, but the rest, including Cressingham, were slain. The Treasurer's rapacity had made him many enemies in Scotland. His body was flayed by the triumphant Scots, and his skin was divided among them "not as sacred relics but in contumely"—so the chronicler puts it. Surrey, meanwhile, apparently lacking archers who might have kept off the Scots, became so alarmed that, having burnt the bridge, and placed Twenge in command of the town, he rode off southwards oblivious of age and infirmities, and did not rest till he found himself safe within the walls of Berwick.² Wallace had won a personal as well as a national triumph. Deseited by the magnates and by Bruce, who had vainly tried to use the movement for his own ends, he had gained a great victory, and seemed likely to be acclaimed as a national hero, for now the whole district between the Forth and the Tweed was lost to the English. Even the town of Berwick was occupied by the Scots, though the castle still held out, and Wallace and his troops spread devastation up to the walls of Carlisle, and would have attacked Durham had not a storm prevented them.

¹ Hemingburgh, II. 136. Two MSS. of this Chronicle give the number as xl, the other writes lx.

² *Ibid.*, II. 134-140, Langtoft, 278, 300, Knighton, I. 378-383

Finally "William the Conqueror," as his followers now called him, retired across the border laden with plunder

The regency government in London was not slow to realise the gravity of the situation, and measures were taken to protect the border.¹ When the very first rumours of the English defeat reached London, Robert Clifford had been sent north to strengthen Surrey's hands, and though unable to check the ravages of the Scots, he managed to carry out a successful retaliatory expedition into Annandale, returning with much booty and many captives.² In February, 1298, Surrey was back in the North, and, thanks to the efforts of the Government, at the head of the largest army yet gathered in the reign.³ With this force he overawed the Scots, who abandoned the siege of Roxburgh with great speed, and allowed the English to re-occupy the town of Berwick. Here, however, Surrey received orders from the King to disband the larger portion of the army, and to quarter the rest in Berwick to await his coming in person.⁴ It was with a grim determination to end this Scottish trouble that Edward returned to England from Flanders. "I would rather conquer once than be often tormented" were words put into his mouth by a political pamphleteer,⁵ and by May he was at York holding a Parliament, to which the Scots were vainly summoned. Within a month there was mustered at Roxburgh an army of 1300 paid horse, 1100 men-at-arms in the retinues of the baronage, and some 12,500 foot, of whom by far the largest part came from Wales. A group of Gascon knights under the Captal de Buch added brilliancy to the host.⁶ Before this invading force Wallace retired, wisely acting on the defensive, and laid the country waste, so that the English had to be fed from home. A strong head-wind delayed the fleet,⁷ and when at length some ships arrived, they were found to carry more wine than food, which proved demoralising to Welsh sobriety and resulted in a serious riot, only reduced to order by the stern measures of the men-at-arms. The army was becom-

¹ Cotton, 339; *Documents of Scottish History*, ii. 237-240, 243-244, 247-249

² *Documents of Scottish History*, ii. 231-232, Hemingburgh, ii. 146-147; Knighton, i. 388-389

³ For details of this army see Dr. Morris's *Welsh Wars*, 285-286.

⁴ Hemingburgh, ii. 155-157, Knighton, i. 393-395.

⁵ Political Songs (Camden Society), 175.

⁶ For these numbers see Dr. Morris's *Welsh Wars*, 286-292.

⁷ Rishanger, 186.

ing demoralised owing to the lack of fighting, and the Welsh were even heard to declare they would desert to the enemy

In the nick of time news was brought to the King on July 21st that Wallace lay but six leagues away, near Falkirk, waiting for an opportunity to fall on the English army should it begin to retreat. In great relief Edward gave the order to advance, which was obeyed with a steadiness and deliberation which was astonishing in view of the recent insubordination. That night the army lay at Linlithgow, sleeping on the ground "with shields for pillows and armour for beds". The King was up betimes, though during the night he had been kicked in the ribs by his horse,¹ and led his army on towards Falkirk, where Wallace had chosen his ground carefully. With a hill behind him and a morass covering his front,² the strength of his position was evident to Edward's practised eye. The English army halted for a well-earned rest, and the King seized the opportunity to hear Mass, as it happened to be the Feast of St Mary Magdalene, and to suggest a hasty meal for his men, who had not tasted food for nearly twenty-four hours. The soldiers, however, were eager for battle, and so the attack was ordered forthwith. The Scots were arrayed in four circles or "schiltrons" of pikemen, the front rank kneeling, those behind standing, a formation calculated to withstand the heaviest cavalry charge. Between these bristling circles were placed the bowmen of Selkirk and Ettrick forests, and behind were stationed the few men-at-arms who had mustered at Wallace's summons. On his side Edward drew up his men in the three usual divisions or "battles," the van under the Earl of Lincoln with the less trustworthy Earls of Norfolk and Hereford. Anthony Bek, Bishop of Durham, led the second division, while the third was under the King's direct command.³ The English first line at once advanced to the attack and got into difficulties in the morass, from which it took some time to extricate itself and wheel round to take the enemy on the flank. The Bishop, who profited by his predecessors' discovery, worked round the obstacle

¹ *Trevet*, 372.

² Rishanger (p. 187) says that stakes were driven into the ground along the front of the Scottish line and joined together with cords.

³ So Hemingburgh, but Harleian MS. 6589 gives four divisions and the names of those who led them. Surrey was the fourth commander, possibly a subdivision of the King's third battle. See Morris's *Welsh Wars*, Appendix iv

and got more quickly into touch with the Scots. In vain he urged his men to await the arrival of the King, they charged down on the "schiltrons" almost simultaneously with Lincoln's division. The Scottish archers were ridden down, their men-at-arms rode off without striking a blow—the malicious said that Wallace accompanied them—but the pikemen stood firm: no mere cavalry charge could break their ranks. This was the opportunity of the Welsh archers, whom Edward now brought up and ordered to concentrate their "fire" at short range on the pikemen, who, not daring to break their solid formation for fear of the cavalry, were quite unable to make any reply. The manœuvre was entirely successful. Gaps were soon made in the "schiltrons," by which the cavalry, now re-formed, could dash down into the heart of the enemy's formation, and the battle degenerated into a rout.¹

The Scots were absolutely defeated; their army, far larger than that of their opponents, if we are to believe the chronicles, was almost annihilated. Edward had achieved his greatest success in war. It is here indeed that we get an opportunity of estimating the great military development of the reign, for the King's organisation had been building up a new system, which was to come to its full perfection in the days of his grandson. When Edward came to the throne he found no satisfactory fighting force at his disposal. The feudal levy had dwindled, it was absolutely without discipline, and political reasons made the King indisposed to give it the chance to become efficient. The only men accustomed to war were the Marcher lords, and they were too insubordinate to form a useful nucleus for a royal army. Moreover, the obligation to serve for forty days only was hampering to the success of any campaign, especially as Edward was determined to abandon the principle of limiting military operations to the summer months. Yet foreign mercenaries could not be used, if Magna Carta was to be obeyed. The King's task therefore was to create an effective military class among his own subjects, and for this purpose he introduced restraint of knighthood, which provided him with material from which to draw his heavy armed cavalry. At the same time he began the principle of payment. In his Welsh wars he made great use of paid cavalry, and when the feudal levy was

¹ Hemingburgh, II 174-181; *Annales Angliae et Scotiae*, 386-387, Rishanger, 187-188.

called out he adopted the practice of retaining the more efficient portion thereof after the forty days were accomplished, paying wages for this extra service, and thus paving the way for a regular paid army. The importance of payment was that it meant discipline. The feudal soldier, and especially the Marcher, was never ready to obey commands. At Falkirk Anthony Bec, the commander of the second line, had been defied by his subordinates, who had charged in spite of his order to await the arrival of the King, telling him that as a bishop he had better confine himself to saying Mass and leave military affairs to others¹. But the paid soldier was obliged to obey orders, he was a servant, not a privileged ally of his commander, and as the paid element increased so did the efficiency of the English army. Feudalism had never provided the foot soldier, indeed wherever feudalism was triumphant, the foot soldier disappeared from the fighting force. In England the kings had kept this element alive as an antidote to feudal power, and Edward in the Statute of Winchester of 1283 maintained the tradition of the Assize of Arms of 1181. Almost from the first his infantry was paid, generally at the rate of twopence a day. It was mustered in the counties and at the expense of each district until mobilisation, when the King became responsible for its wages. Even this force lacked discipline, and was unaccustomed to the hard work that Edward demanded of his soldier. At times therefore he depended entirely on voluntary enlistment, and of the foot in the army of 1298 none were impressed, so that Falkirk was fought with an infantry force which was practically entirely professional². It was this portion of the Edwardian army that provided the bowmen, and the long-bow was the great weapon of the future. In the past the cross-bow had never been popular in England, as it smacked of the mercenary, and from the King's point of view was expensive. It was heavy and clumsy, effective when ready for action, but difficult and tedious to load, and to be used only by elaborately trained men. But the real development of weapon in this reign was the long-bow, and for this credit is due partly to Edward's foresight, partly to the circumstances of the case. It seems to be undoubted that the southern Welsh were the first to be proficient with this weapon, and it was the southern

¹ Hemingburgh, ii 179-180.

² *Ibid*, 173

Welsh who had so largely contributed to Edward's success in subduing North Wales—the land of spearmen. The King was aware of the value of this weapon, and adopted it in his armies, though the great majority of his bowmen were still drawn from Wales. The long-bow was both simple and effective. It was superior to the cross-bow in the same way that later the breech-loading gun was superior to the muzzle-loader; it triumphed over the short-bow in that its range was greater, for it was drawn back to the ear, whereas the short-bow was bent only as far as the chest. Edward was quick to see the value of this missile weapon as an adjunct to the existing military system, if used in combination with cavalry. Combination was already known as a principle of tactics, for it had been practised with success during the Crusades.¹ The Edwardian armies used it both in Wales and in Scotland. In one of the battles during the Welsh war in 1295 the Earl of Warwick had defeated a body of strongly intrenched spearmen by placing groups of cross-bowmen and archers between his squadrons of cavalry, and using them to open breaches in the enemy's line into which the horsemen could charge.² The lesson learnt in the Welsh wars was found useful at Falkirk, where the same tactics met with a similar success. As yet, however, the long-bow had not asserted its final superiority on the strength of its long range, for at Falkirk the premature charge of the English cavalry had brought the two forces so close together, that almost any missile weapon would have done the work of the archers indeed they were assisted by the enthusiasm of those not possessed of bows, who threw stones at the rings of Scottish pikemen.³ Thus England was adopting a weapon which was to place her in the first rank of military powers, a weapon, too, which was to wield a great influence over her social history. The long-bowman was becoming an integral part of an English army, and a necessity of English tactics. Springing as he did from the yeomen of the country, he was to bring into prominence a new class of people, the men who for good or ill were to mould the constitution of the country. Falkirk was essentially a middle-class battle on both sides—the Scots were almost totally unsupported by their nobles, the English baronage would have

¹ See Professor Oman's account of the battle of Arsouf in 1191 in his *Art of War*, 310-315.

² *Trevet*, 335-336.

³ *Hemingburgh*, II. 180.

been helpless without their archers—it has therefore a constitutional importance, quite apart from its political effects.

Though the victory of Falkirk was decisive, Scotland was not conquered. The King was not well enough to take an active part in further campaigning, though English detachments penetrated as far as St. Andrews and Perth, and before long he was on his way back to England. The conquest of the North was a greater task than the conquest of the West. Apart from the fact that, in spite of their many divisions, there were more signs of a national resistance in Scotland than in Wales, geographical conditions played into the hands of the Scots. It was not possible to pin them into the fastnesses of their hills, surround them with army and fleet, and starve them into surrender as had been done in Wales. On the contrary, though the country was easier of access, the problem was how to feed the invading force, while the home troops never lacked provisions. Moreover, Scotland could not be held like Wales with a few well-placed castles. The upkeep of fabric and garrisons was expensive, and the district to be kept quiet was more extensive¹. The King's lack of funds made the payment of wages precarious, and mutinies caused by lack of pay, such as that of the garrison of Berwick in 1301, were by no means infrequent. Apart from the difficulties natural to the enterprise, there were other reasons that hindered Edward's policy. He was not able to devote the time and sustained attention to the conquest of Scotland that he had given to his earlier enterprise. His English subjects did not support him in the undertaking. As soon as he had reached Carlisle, in 1298, the Constable and Marshal began to complain of hardships, and of the way certain lands had been allotted by the King, while already the Durham levies had gone home without the leave of their militant Bishop.² Even the Borderers refused to continue the war, and the outlook for the success of Edward's policy was therefore not propitious. His relations with Scotland for the rest of his reign were intermittent and unsatisfactory. His frequent campaigns in the North were short and devoid of military interest. No sustained effort was possible. Scottish opposition was strengthened by the departure of Wallace to France, where for

¹ For the expenses for maintaining the castles see Bain, *Calendar of Scottish Documents*, II. 275, 282-285.

² *Historiae Dunelmensis Scriptores Tres*, ed by J. Raine (Surtees Society), p. 76.

a time he was kept under arrest by the French King, for this allowed the aristocratic party to capture the national movement¹

For more than a year after the unsatisfactory Falkirk campaign Edward was unable to return to Scotland. In 1299, it is true, he tried to take advantage of a truce made with France, to lead an army northwards, but though he went to York, where he held a Parliament, and advanced to Berwick, the magnates proved refractory. Thus Stirling, closely besieged by the Scots, was left to its fate, and had to surrender to the enemy, while the King returned to London.² Another abortive expedition was undertaken in the summer of 1300, for which the feudal levy was called out for the first time since 1282, though men were enlisted for pay as well. The army numbered perhaps some 2000 horse and 10,000 foot,³ but nothing was accomplished save the taking of the Castle of Carlaverock, an event celebrated in verse to atone for the meagre result of two months' campaigning. In 1301 another abortive campaign⁴ was followed by another truce to last till November, 1302, at the suggestion of the King of France. Early in 1303 John Segrave was sent into Scotland, but his carelessness allowed the younger Comyn and Simon Fraser to take him by surprise, and though the day was partially retrieved for the English by Robert Neville, it was enough to force Edward to carry the conquest of Scotland to a definite conclusion himself,⁵ his hands being now quite free since he had signed a definite peace with France. In May the King and his full army were at Roxburgh, and though south of the Forth no opposition was encountered, the Regent John Comyn of Badenoch held the country to the north, and was supported by a large number of the Scottish magnates and a certain number of paid troops from Ireland.⁶ An advance into the eastern Highlands met with little or no resistance,⁷ and cowed by this display of force the unheroic

¹ *Annales Angliae et Scotiae*, 387.

² Hemingburgh, II 185, Trevor, 376; *Historiae Dunelmensis Scriptores Tres* ed. by J. Raine (Surtees Society, 1839), p. 76.

³ See *The Siege of Carlaverock*, ed. by N H Nicolas (London, 1828), pp 2-88.

⁴ Bain, *Calendar of Documents*, II 373. The army consisted entirely of archers with a few light horse. Christmas was spent at Linlithgow.

⁵ Trevor, 400-401, Herringburgh, II 222-223, *Documents of Scottish History*, II. 448

⁶ *Documents of Scottish History*, II. 453

⁷ The English penetrated as far north as Kinloss.

Scottish leaders hastened to make their submission. By the autumn Edward was back at Dunfermline, where he prepared to pass the winter. Stirling, however, still held out. Special siege engines for its leaguer were ordered up in January, 1304, to be followed by more in April; a supply of sulphur and saltpetrie for "Greek fire" was brought from York, whence also in June crossbowmen and carpenters were sent to assist the besiegers. The King himself took charge of the operations early in April, but it was not till July 20th that the brave garrison surrendered. While Stirling was being besieged other detachments had been reducing the country to order, and receiving those who surrendered into the King's peace, and in February a formal treaty of peace had been signed by the Regent Comyn and his chief followers at "Strath-orde". One exception was made to the pardons offered to all who would submit. William Wallace, robber-made knight as he appeared to the English chroniclers, unpardonable rebel as he was regarded by the King, had returned to Scotland and was actively engaged against the invaders. To him and to his friends Edward would grant no pardon, but demanded unconditional surrender.¹ Even after the King had handed over the conduct of Scottish affairs to John Segrave and returned to England, this brave little band held out, but soon Wallace was no more than a hapless fugitive, with little hope of ultimate escape. In August he fell into the enemy's hands, and on the 22nd of that month was brought to London, tried in Westminster Hall, and condemned as a traitor to his King, though he denied that he owed any allegiance to a sovereign whose authority he had never acknowledged. The execution of Wallace seemed the death-blow to Scottish independence. He alone, of those who had drawn the sword for Scotland, had shown any steadfastness in resisting the English advance, and if the glory that came to surround his name in later years was not altogether deserved, he had never truckled to his opponents. At least he was the only Scot up to this time who had so threatened Edward's power as to be thought worthy of death.

Scotland was conquered, and in Edward's eyes it was now to be ranked with his Welsh dominion. The Court of King's Bench and the Exchequer was removed back from York to London, as a mark

¹ *Documents of Scottish History*, ii 470-473. In the treaty of peace, however, a non-committal sentence suggested, though it did not promise, clemency to Wallace if he surrendered (*Rot. Parl.*, i. 213).

that the King's presence was no longer necessary in the North, and a scheme for the better government of Scotland was drawn up, with the consent of a mixed body of advisers taken from both countries. The Scottish Parliament was left untouched, but true to his principles, Edward completely reorganised the judicial system, appointing sheriffs and devising four circuits of judges to administer the law. As in Wales, Celtic customs were condemned, and all were obliged to obey the same code of laws. As Warden of Scotland Edward appointed his nephew John of Brittany, earlier his representative in Gascony, and all seemed quietly settled. But peace was not secured. Scotland had not been reduced as effectively as Wales, nor were there adequate means of keeping down the country.

For the moment Edward had triumphed, and this despite many obstacles, quite apart from the inherent difficulties in Scotland itself. Till 1303 he had been hampered by the open or thinly veiled opposition of France. The Scots had looked to France for their chief support against the invader, and it was not till 1299 that a provisional agreement between Edward and Philip was made, on the basis of the Papal award, much to the delight of the English people. By the Treaty of Montreuil Edward was to marry Philip's sister Margaret, and on September 4th the ceremony was performed, when the old man of sixty was wedded to his youthful bride. The marriage produced a truce but no definite peace, for Philip was loath to abandon the cause of the Scots and desired to include "King John of Scotland" in the arrangement. Edward compromised by agreeing to surrender his prisoner Balliol to the Pope, on condition that no attempt should be made to use him against English policy. This truce was renewed from time to time,¹ till finally in May, 1303, a definite peace was signed at Paris. Philip was at last induced to restore Gascony, Bordeaux had just repudiated his rule,² and he was himself fully occupied by his quarrel with Pope Boniface and by the war against Flanders. At the same time, by tacitly abandoning his championship of Scotland, he left his new ally free to undertake the definite conquest of that country. The alliance was cemented by the betrothal of Edward's heir to Isabella, daughter of the French King.³

¹ The Report of Conference held in 1300 in the month of August between English representatives and Boniface VIII. with regard to a peace with France, is printed and discussed in *English Historical Review*, xvii. 518-527.

² *Trevet*, 397

³ *Foedera*, i. 952-955.

CHAPTER V

INTERNAL COMPLICATIONS
(1279-1306)

ALL through the prosecution of his Scottish schemes and his attempts to avert French intervention therein, Edward had had many problems to face at home. More and more he found that his energetic policy needed a larger revenue than he could command, and his attempts to supply the deficiency affected the whole aspect of the remaining part of his reign. It had been his need of money that had led to the Model Parliament of 1295. The elements that went to make up a full Parliament—lords, spiritual and temporal, knights of the shires, and representatives of the towns and lesser clergy—had all been called from time to time during the reign, but not on any definite system. Though towns and shires had both been represented in the assembly of 1273, called during the King's absence, and all but the lesser clergy in 1275,¹ in 1290 only the barons had been summoned, though knights of the shires joined them later. In 1294 no boroughs sent representatives, and in 1293 both clergy and laity had met in two provincial assemblies, at Northampton and York, while at the so-called Parliament of Acton Burnell no clergy had been present, as the main business was the condemnation of David of Wales, and priests could take no part in the shedding of blood. Edward's method had been to summon those who were concerned in a particular business, a principle which he himself put into words in 1300, when he refused a definite answer to the Pope until he had taken the advice of all those whom the matter affected.² It was this idea that prevailed in 1295 when the Model Parliament was convened. The earls and barons, judges and ecclesiastical dignitaries were summoned by special writ, the last including the

¹ *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xxv 231-242.

² *Annales Lond.*, 108.

archbishops, bishops, the heads of the three orders of Sempringham, the Templars, and the Hospitallers, and certain abbots and priors. Each sheriff was ordered to send two knights as representatives of his shire and two burgesses from each city or borough therein, whilst the bishops were to secure the representation of the cathedral and parochial clergy,¹ a vain attempt to graft Convocation on to Parliament. The model was not followed in after years with unwavering fidelity. Of the spiritual peers only the archbishops, bishops, and the grand prior of the Hospitalles were permanent members, as the abbots and priors varied in numbers from time to time, while the lesser clergy soon ceased to attend. With regard to the temporal peers, if earls could claim prescriptive right, Edward had no intention of allowing hereditary claims to check his absolute power of choosing his counsellors from among the barons. He did not continue to issue writs to the same personages for all succeeding Parliaments in his reign, and in the matter of the Commons too he sometimes neglected the model of 1295, notably when in 1297 he obtained a grant of money from a few people summoned privately to his chamber.² He was laying down the lines upon which the English Parliament was to develop, quite unconscious of the step he was taking. He was pursuing a course which seemed to him to be the best way of filling his treasury. The best tax was the one most easily raised, so those who could afford to pay were summoned to decide the extent of their generosity. Edward, like his rival Philip of France, when in 1302 he summoned the Estates General, needed support in his great enterprises, and so appealed to those who could give him that support.

Money had been needed in 1295. it was still more urgently necessary in 1297, and this occasioned a struggle between the King and the Church—not for the first time. The two great orders of Friars, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, were rising to the zenith of their power; both were busy building the central homes of their order in London, both in turn had provided the occupant of the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury, for the Dominican Kilwardby, on his promotion to the Cardinalate, had given place to the Franciscan Peckham. When the latter landed in England in the summer of 1279, not content with at once renewing the old struggle between

¹ The so-called "Præmunitentes" clause to the writs of archbishops and bishops.

² *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 102.

Canterbury and York for supremacy, he proceeded to challenge the King himself, partly in the interests of the temporalities of his see, partly as the champion of ecclesiastical power. Though he never forgot to befriend the poor and oppressed, rebuking even the Earl of Surrey for keeping too many head of game on his land to the detriment of his tenants,¹ it was to support ecclesiastical privileges that he ordered in a Synod, held at Reading within four months of his reaching England, that Magna Carta should be posted in all cathedral and collegiate churches, and that excommunication should fall on all who infringed the liberties of the Church. He took a very high hand with the King, and in September returned a letter of summons on the ground that it was too curt in its language.² However, in the Parliament held in November of the same year he was compelled not only to withdraw his orders about Magna Carta but to submit to the Statute of Mortmain, which forbade the alienation of landed estates in favour of cathedral chapters and monastic houses. Again it was a financial consideration that had suggested this piece of legislation. Lands held by corporate bodies were said to be in mortmain or a dead hand, because such bodies never died, and therefore never paid certain dues, such as reliefs. Henry III. in his second charter of 1217 had forbidden a prevalent custom of conveying estates nominally to the Church, while they were still enjoyed in reality by their original owners, and in 1259 the barons in the Provisions of Westminster forbade the invasion of land by monks without the overlord's leave.³ This, however, was omitted from Henry III.'s sanctioning Statute of Marlborough in 1267, an omission which compelled Edward I to issue his Statute De Villis Religiosis, or Mortmain as it is usually called, in 1279, which forbade grants to all corporations whatsoever, lay as well as clerical. This was an attempt to check the clergy's legitimate power of acquiring landed possessions, though it must be remembered that they had brought this legislation upon themselves partly by their unbridled desire to increase their wealth, partly by the way they had assisted the evasion of taxation.

The Statute of 1279 was part of a definite policy. It had been foreshadowed in the Quo Warranto writs, it was re-opened in 1290 in Quia Emptores, and though the financial reason lay at the bottom

¹ *Peckham Letters*, 38-39.

² *Ibid.*, 72.

³ *Stubbs' Charters*, 404, Sec. 14.

of these enactments, there was present also a very definite idea of regulating the relations of Church and State. This became evident a little later, when at the Synod of Lambeth Peckham tried to exclude the authority of the King's officer from certain suits heard in the ecclesiastical courts, an attempt which Edward summarily checked.¹ However, the struggle continued,² though the King endeavoured to end it by the writ "Circumspecte agatis," which strove to define the jurisdiction of the Church Courts, and to limit it to matters for which the punishment was penance, or to matrimonial suits and the probate of wills, which in cases of personality were considered to fall under the spiritual power. The power of the Church was injured in theory rather than in fact by these measures. Alienation in mortmain continued to be effected, partly by the strange willingness of English kings to concede permissions for it in special cases, partly by the ingenuity of the canon lawyers who, arguing that Edward's statute applied only to grants of lands by gift or sale and not to land gained by process of law, invented the "collusive recovery". Edward therefore in 1285 issued another statute which gave the determination of a claimant's right to land to a jury, and if the jury disallowed a monastery's claim the land was forfeited to the overlord.³ The ingenuity of the canon lawyers was not yet exhausted for they invented another legal dodge—the "Use," by which the land went to the proper heir, but he was directed to hold it to the "use of" a religious house, in other words, pay the income to the monastery. It was not until 1391 that a statute forbade the holding of any land to the use of an ecclesiastical body.⁴

As papal taxation fell almost entirely on their shoulders, the clergy thought it only fair that the laity should provide for a large proportion of the King's needs. Still Convocation voted money, though only under pressure, and Edward in 1290 received a grant of a tenth of all ecclesiastical benefices from the Pope for his unaccomplished Crusade, money which he did not hesitate to divert to his own uses. The most important disagreement on the question of clerical taxation was in 1294. In dire straits for money in face of his Gascon and Welsh

¹ *Peckham Letters*, 235-237.

² The Ecclesiastical Courts became a matter of popular complaint (*Politica Songs* (Camden Society), 155-159).

³ Statutes, I. 87.

⁴ *Ibd.*, II. 80.

troubles, the King took into his hands the priories alien, that is religious houses dependent on foreign chapters, with the exception of those belonging to the Cistercian Order, applying the revenues to political purposes, and allowing the monks a bare pittance for their maintenance.¹ In July of the same year he sent out commissioners who conducted a "scrutiny" into all the possessions of monastic houses, a polite formula for the seizure of monies laid up in these institutions. The natural indignation of the clergy found expression in Convocation, when the King demanded one-half of all clerical incomes. But there were no great ecclesiastical leaders; the intrepid Peckham was dead, his see vacant, the Archbishop of York feared the King, while the energies of the famous Anthony Bec, Bishop of Durham, were being occupied in Germany. Thus concessions demanded as a condition of the grant were only granted in non-essentials, Edward entrenching himself behind the magnates, whose consent he protested was necessary to repeal any measure passed by their advice. Before his unbridled anger the unfortunate Dean of St. Paul's fell down dead in a fit, and the grant was meekly voted.² But the King's victory was not final. The see of Canterbury was filled by the appointment of Robert of Winchelsey, who proved to be a still more determined opponent of the royal power than his predecessor. His hands were strengthened by Boniface VIII's Bull *Clericis Laicos*, which forbade clergy to give money to a temporal prince without papal sanction. The Bull was issued in February, 1296, but it was not published till the following year, when fresh royal demands were anticipated.³ Winchelsey in the name of Convocation gave an uncompromising refusal to grant money, to which the King retorted that if the clergy did not help the state, the state would not help the clergy, and practically outlawed them by withdrawing all royal protection, an attitude which ensured success, as the Pope was too much occupied by the resistance offered to the Bull in France to lend assistance to his English friends. The northern clergy were the first to surrender, and by February the Bishop of Durham had arranged a compromise, whereby the outlawry was redeemed by a fine, which was not called a tax.

¹ Worcester Contin., ii. 273.

² Hemingburgh, ii. 54-57; Cotton, 248-250.

³ Hemingburgh, ii. 113-116, where the Bull is given in full; Wilkins, *Concilia*, ii. 222-224.

Winchelsey, reduced to great straits, with his horses even removed from his stables, might issue excommunications against all who gave in, but in a Synod which met at St. Paul's had to allow his followers to make their own terms. By Easter all but the Primate and the Bishop of Lincoln had followed the lead of their northern brethren, the indomitable Archbishop still holding out, though obliged to live on charity. The King could not afford to prolong the struggle. The Scots were in open rebellion, at home the barons were proving unruly, his heart was set on an expedition to Flanders, and so terms were made with the Primate. A public reconciliation was organised, so that all might see the good feeling now existing between the two antagonists, the King promising to restore all that had been taken illegally and excusing himself for his past actions on the plea of public necessity.

Winchelsey's support was much needed, for already at a meeting of magnates at Salisbury decided opposition had been offered to Edward's wish that, while he led an army to Flanders, the barons should reinforce the lately depleted troops in Gascony, and thus place the French King between two fires. The great magnates had their own grievances. They had not forgiven the Quo Warranto proceedings, and the Marcher lords in particular objected to their loss of power and importance owing to the subjugation of Wales. The turbulent Earl of Gloucester was dead, but his rival, the Earl of Hereford, supported by Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, led the opposition at the Salisbury Council. When asked to serve the King in Gascony all the magnates began to excuse themselves, Bigod and Bohun in their respective capacities of Earl Marshal and Constable declaring that they were not obliged to serve on any expedition which the King did not lead himself. Both sides lost their tempers; violent scenes occurred. "You shall go or hang," swore the excited King to the Earl Marshal, who made the famous retort that "he would neither go nor hang".¹ The opposition led by Bigod and Bohun was purely selfish, dictated without doubt by a desire to prevent Edward's constant use of paid troops, which was making him independent of the feudal levy. The magnates were not ready to serve in Gascony, if it meant that mercenaries would be employed

¹ Hemingburgh, ii. 121. On the question of Norfolk's personal grievance against Edward see Morris's *Welsh Wars*, 274-275.

in Flanders, but despite their factiousness they secured considerable support in the country. If many were annoyed at the summary justice meted out to the clergy, far more were alienated by the King's recent exactions. In 1294 he had seized all the wool in the country, and demanded large sums for its redemption, on the plea that the land should be protected by its own fruits. Again in 1297 orders had been issued that all wool and hides should be taken to certain ports, where the small lots were subjected to the "maltolt" of forty shillings a sack, and the larger ones were exchanged for tallies promising future repayment. In addition each county had been ordered to provide two thousand quarters of corn and a like amount of oats for the Flemish expedition, or in place thereof a proportionate amount of beef and pork. The nation was up in arms at these exactions. Wool was the staple commodity of the country, and its seizure was bound to create an economic crisis. To many districts, only just recovering from heavy losses to their stock in recent years, this blow at the export trade was all the more severe. Moreover, the heavy taxation of the reign was beginning to tell. The well-to-do are reduced to poverty, cries a political versifier. The poor man has to sell his all to pay the taxes. "It is not a sensible law that gives my wool to the King." Money is so scarce that a man can find no market for his goods, indeed rebellion is highly possible should a leader be found.¹

Despite the magnates' attitude and the murmurings of the people, Edward pressed on his preparations for war, only abandoning the idea of a Gascon expedition. The militia was summoned, and men owning land of £20 rental and upwards were called out for service, but the indignant barons were arming in self-defence, having already excluded all tax gatherers and other royal agents from their possessions.² It was at this juncture that Winchelsey's aid was found indispensable to Edward, who managed to induce certain lords to swear to be loyal to their sovereign, and in the event of his death while abroad to accept his son as king. Bohun, Bigod, and the majority of the magnates still held out, for which the Earl Marshal and the Constable were deprived of their offices. Boldly facing the crisis, Edward issued an appeal to his people. He considered himself in honour bound to go to Flanders, for he could not betray his

¹ Political Songs (Camden Society), 182-186.

² Hemingburgh, II. 121-122

allies abroad. He told the story of the baronial opposition from his point of view, explaining that his taxation was for public not private ends, and denying the report that he had refused certain reforms, since no request had been laid before him.¹ When a list of grievances was presented to him, however, he gave his usual answer that he could say nothing definite without his whole Council.² In the same way he refused to allow Convocation to apply for papal permission to vote money, announcing quite pleasantly but equally firmly, that he must tax clerical goods, though in moderation, and further warning the clergy that if they retaliated by excommunication all their property would be seized. Accordingly a levy, equal to an income tax of four shillings in the pound, was taken from the temporalities of the clergy.³ Nothing could better illustrate the terrible weight of mediæval taxation than this so-called moderate levy, a taxation, too, which not only interfered with trade, but was more often than not estimated on capital. It was an age of false economic theory, when taxation pressed more heavily on the poor than on the rich. It was not the barons who had a grievance, but the men who might be reduced to penury by the bad harvests, which frequently occurred during this period. The distress pictured by the ballad-mongers was no exaggeration, but the poor could only protest, they were disorganised and unlettered; they felt the burden of taxation, but as yet they were not ready to revolt against it. To Edward and his advisers a tax was a source of revenue, and they looked no further than the immediate necessity. Nothing could militate against prosperity like mediæval finance. Edward left England on August 24th on a fruitless expedition to Flanders. His ally the Emperor would not move, his own troops proved unruly. There was a great fight between the men of Yarmouth and their Cinque Port rivals as soon as the Flemish coast was reached, while the Welsh troops behaved very badly, plundering wherever they went, and driving the men of Ghent into covert hostility. Much to Edward's relief the Pope managed to negotiate a truce, though Philip was by no means willing to accept the intervention of the Holy See. But when Edward returned in February, 1298, he had accomplished nothing, at the cost of neglecting both the internal

¹ *Foedera*, i. 872.

² *Hemingsburgh*, ii. 124-126; *Trevet*, 360-361.

³ *Cotton*, 335; *Parl. Writs*, i. 396

affairs of his kingdom and the danger which threatened from Scotland.

It was in England that the main political interest had centred during these months of absence. Even before Edward had set sail from Sandwich, the Earls had gone to London, and had protested at the bar of the Exchequer against the levying of the eighth which the King had recently demanded, and on September 1st Winchelsea re-issued the excommunication against those who interfered with the privileges and possessions of the Church. Young Edward of Carnarvon, the nominal regent of the kingdom in his father's absence, had already been instructed by the King to issue proclamations to the effect that the eighth and the prizes on wool should not be treated as a precedent,¹ and on the advice of his Council he now summoned a meeting of his supporters, which was gradually extended so as to approximate to the Parliament of 1295, though neither the boroughs nor the lower clergy were included. The Earls came in force, and were too powerful to be resisted, their policy was vindicated in popular estimation by the news of the Scottish victory over the English forces at Stirling Bridge, for had they not declared that in the disturbed state of the North it was no time for an expedition to Flanders? Accordingly on October 12th the regent agreed to the famous Confirmatio Cartarum, or re-issue of Magna Carta, and to the Charter of the Forests. It was further ordered that copies should be kept in all Cathedrals to be read to the people twice a year, and that the "maltolt" should not be levied, though the export duty on wool and wool-fells, granted at the beginning of the reign, was retained. The demands of the baronage seem to have exceeded this confirmation, for the chroniclers have perpetuated the memory of another document known as the *De Tallagio non Concedendo*, which has found its way into the Statute Book, and has been appealed to as an authentic enactment at one at least of the crises of English history. It is now agreed that this document was never officially sanctioned, and that it was the more moderate demands contained in the first record to which Edward of Carnarvon gave his consent, and which were confirmed by the King at

¹ Letters in the Memoranda Rolls (L.T.R.) of the Exchequer printed in *Royal Hist. Soc. Transactions*, New Series, iii. 286-290. These letters help us to correct the faulty chronology of the chroniclers as to these events.

Ghent.¹ The victory of the Earls was by no means universally popular. A pamphleteer of the time could upbraid the degenerate race of the English, which used to serve, but now, reversing the true order of things, ruled over the King and his children. Some perhaps understood that recent events were but a counterblow to Quo Warranto. In their later actions too Bohun and Bigod showed themselves to be merely factious, and not leaders of a national movement. They constantly harassed the King with demands for reconfirmation, notably on the eve of the Falkirk campaign, when it was rumoured that the King would not acknowledge the validity of a charter sealed outside England.² At the end of the same campaign they complained of the time they had been kept in the field, though in 1297 they had used the necessity of an expedition to Scotland as a reason for not going to Flanders. Later still, in 1305, we find the true nature of the magnates revealed, when they obtained the traditional leave to tallage their tenants in a manner similar to the tallage levied by the King on the royal demesne in 1304.³ Taxation, it seems, was only iniquitous when it pressed on the baronage.

Edward had been defeated and the defeat rankled. A combination of two quite separate quarrels had compelled his submission. There was no real connection between the clerical and baronial complaints, but each had helped the other. Though the clergy now agreed to follow the Pope's advice, and save principle at the expense of reality by voting money to the King before he asked for it, their original protest had paved the way for the Confirmation of the Charters. Neither Winchelsea nor the barons were ever forgiven, and the future years of the reign were to be spent by the King not only in a vain attempt to reduce Scotland to the position of Wales, but also in fighting the growing baronial opposition.

The chief battle was waged round the forest perambulations promised in 1297 but never executed. The royal forests—districts where game was preserved for royal hunting—were under the direct control of crown officials; two justices, the one north and the other south of the Trent, supervised the whole forest administration, and

¹ For a discussion of these documents see *Chartes des Libertés Anglaises*, publiées par Charles Bémont (Paris, 1892), where they are also printed in full.

² Contrary to the usual practice Edward had taken the great seal with him when he went to Flanders.

³ Rot. Parl. i. 161-162.

beneath them was a hierarchy of officials. The lowest order of these was the foresters, or as we should call them gamekeepers, who were supposed to be paid for their services, but who really paid the wardens for their office, and recouped themselves with liberal interest by extortions from the peasantry. This was the grievance which gave popularity to the constant baronial attack on the forests, and to the demand for perambulations of inquiry, though the barons' desire to curtail the area of forest land was really inspired by their own interests, for much of it lay within their own holdings. Edward sympathised with the grievance of official oppression, and while he stoutly opposed deforestation, appointed commissions in 1298 to enquire into all cases of maladministration by justices, foresters, and verderers¹. This in no way satisfied the magnates, who in the Parliament of 1299 demanded re-confirmation of the charters and a speedy "deforestation". The King temporised, refusing to commit himself, and finally left London only to be pursued by the barons, who were promised a favourable answer from the Council. When, however, the charters thus re-confirmed were read to the assembled people at Paul's Cross, it was found that the first five articles of the Charter of the Forest, referring to deforestation, were omitted, and a clause added saving the rights of the Crown, which seemed to nullify the whole confirmation. The assembled magnates and Londoners were furious, and after Easter the King was constrained to yield almost all the points in dispute, and in September five justices were appointed to perambulate the forests. Even then the leaders of the opposition were not satisfied, and returned to the charge in the following year in a Parliament at Westminster. The King, who was anxious to be free to prosecute the Scottish war, set his seal to the Articuli Supra Cartas on March 6th. As an additional concession the King issued fresh commissions for perambulating the forests, so as to expedite matters by increasing the number of justices. Finally, Edward agreed to many "deforestations". But this was not the only point at issue. Emboldened by their success, the barons and clergy demanded the dismissal of the Treasurer, Walter Langton, Bishop of Coventry. The King angrily refused, and knowing that Winchelsea was responsible for this step, as also for the demand that no clerical taxation was to be enforced save

¹ Cal. of Patent Rolls (1292-1301), 373-374.

with the consent of the Pope, he laid his plans for breaking up the coalition against him. A final reconfirmation of the charters, together with the concessions over the forests, enabled him to win over the barons, and to use them to inflict a heavy defeat upon Winchelsea.

The opportunity lay ready to hand. A convinced upholder of Papal power, the Archbishop had lately been used by Boniface VIII. to deliver an ultimatum to the King with regard to Scotland. A Papal letter had been issued in 1299, at the suggestion probably of Scottish representatives at Rome, of whom possibly Wallace was one, in which Boniface required his "beloved Son in Christ" to desist from harassing the Scots, and to surrender all claims to the northern kingdom; declaring that Scotland had never been an English fief, that the homage sworn by the Scots in 1291 was invalid, as having been extorted by force, that the only rightful claimant to superiority was the Holy See, and that, therefore, if Edward thought he really had a just claim he must submit it for judgment at Rome. This letter was sent to Winchelsea, who was ordered to deliver it in person to the King, a mission entailing a pursuit of the royal army into Scotland. It was in August, 1300, that the letter reached Edward, who after a characteristic ebullition of temper told the Papal emissary that an answer in due form would be sent when a full muster of the King's Council had considered the subject. The matter therefore was brought up after the Lincoln Parliament of 1301 had completed its other business, but meanwhile fresh evidence as to the English claims over Scotland had been ordered from the monasteries, and from the Universities there had been summoned learned clerks to advise the King on the legal question. The third Estate had gone home, but Edward laid the whole matter before the barons, playing on their antipathy to Papal interference, and asking for a declaration in support of the English claims. It was a skilful move, calculated to cause division in the ranks of the opposition, and separate the baronial party from the clerical supporters of the Pope, and it was entirely successful. A letter repudiating the Papal claims in no measured terms, was signed by a large number of the baronage—either immediately at Lincoln or in the course of a month or so in other places—though possibly the letter never did and was never meant to reach the Pope, but was intended more particularly as a political manifesto to the opponents

of the Government in England. At the same time the legal advisers of the King drew up a long vindication of Edward's position, making incursion into past history as far as the mythical King Brutus in the days of the prophet Samuel, but ignoring Richard I.'s action in surrendering the homage of William the Lion. This, too, though addressed to the Pope, probably never reached him, but Edward thus defeated the half-hearted attempt of Boniface to extend his temporal power to Britain, and at the same time used it to strengthen his own position.¹

Winchelsey had sinned beyond forgiveness. Edward considered that opposition experienced at the Parliament of Lincoln was to be traced to his machinations,² nor could he forget the Archbishop's part in the events of 1297. So in the vindictive spirit which seems to have increased with advancing age he set himself to degrade the man who had dared to defy him. Having already weakened the Archbishop's position in the nation by associating him with the unpopular doctrine of Papal interference, he henceforth did his utmost to deprive him of his last resource, the support of the Papal Curia. Boniface VIII. was beginning to fear the power of Philip of France, which was ultimately to crush him, and was drawing nearer to Edward as a possible ally. He was therefore willing to efface the memory of his letter with regard to Scotland, now two years old, by assisting in the attack on Winchelsey. There was an old-standing dispute between King and Archbishop about the presentation to the living of Pagham in Sussex, and the Pope now agreed to decide the question against Winchelsey, and to follow this up by excommunicating the Archbishop. Though the excommunication was withdrawn in the following year, the campaign was carried on by Bishop Langton's acquittal at Rome on the charge of immorality brought against him at the instigation of Winchelsey, his avowed enemy. Boniface's successor Benedict XI was approached by Edward to allow the Archbishop of York to defy a cherished privilege of the southern Province by carrying his Cross openly and unrebuked in London, and when Clement V. in his turn attained to the Chair of St Peter in 1305, his assistance was invoked for the final humiliation of the proud Archbishop. The new Pope was a

¹ *Foedera*, i. 926-27; *Annales Lond.*, 104-125; *Hemingsburgh*, ii. 189 213; Rishanger, 446-453. Cf. *The Ancestor*, No. vi. 187-189.

² *Foedera*, i. 983.

Gascon¹ and well affected towards the English King', he was also a tool of the King of France, who was at last on friendly terms with his vassal of Aquitaine, so in February, 1306, Winchelsea was suspended and summoned to appear at the Papal Court. With strange inconsistency he besought the King to intercede for him, and Edward was not slow to seize the opportunity of speaking his mind: for far from giving his support he wrote to the Pope detailing the many outrages committed by the Primate. Winchelsea was at last defeated. He left England for Bordeaux, whither the Pope had summoned him, and did not return till Edward II had ascended the throne.

The King, determined to have his own way, used the friendliness of Clement V. to secure a Bull absolving him from his oaths with regard to the charters, and allowing him to ignore the various confirmations and additions to which he had given assent. The dispensation, however, was employed with moderation, and Edward only used it in the case of the forests, where he could claim that he was responding to the wishes of some of the dwellers in the forest districts.² It may be therefore that it was a boon to the lesser folk when, in May, 1306, Edward took advantage of the Papal Bull to revoke his recent acts of deforestation, and accompanied this revocation by arrangements for the better control of the forest officials, and for bringing them to justice for oppressive and illegal acts; but the barons won in the end, for his son and successor was compelled to consent to all his father's deforestments, which consent, if revoked later in his reign, was reaffirmed at the accession of Edward III.

Edward I. had now won an unassailable position. He had separated the baronage from the clergy, and he had defeated the great clerical leader. Yet another ecclesiastic was to feel the weight of his anger. Anthony Bec, Bishop of Durham, had held a high position in the councils of the King. A man of arrogant and restless nature, he was nevertheless upright and chaste far beyond many of his contemporaries; he had represented the King at the Treaty of Righam; he had assisted at the Conference of Norham; soldier as well as ecclesiastic, he had led the second division at Falkirk, but in spite of all these services he had earned the King's hatred by join-

¹ He was actually Archbishop of Bordeaux when chosen Pope.

² Rot. Parl., i 177-178.

ing the opposition at the Parliament of Lincoln.¹ Finding him involved in a bitter though trifling quarrel with the Prior and Monastery of Durham, Edward grasped the opportunity to humiliate his erstwhile friend. In 1302, while both combatants were fighting their case at Rome, he seized the Bishop's temporalities, and thus struck a decisive blow at the power of one of his wealthiest and strongest opponents.² Edward had also been reducing other recalcitrants to order. Since 1297 he had had constant trouble with his magnates, not because his policy had become more oppressive than in the past, but because many recent deaths threw the leadership of his subjects into new and less competent hands. The King therefore was driven to a policy, practised to a certain extent in the earlier days of his reign, of drawing the great earldoms into close association with the royal house. The earls who had been most faithful in the past were those who had blood connection with the King, and already yet another earldom, that of Gloucester, was secured to the son of Joan of Acre, the daughter whom Edward had married to Gilbert de Clare. Edward used the same methods with regard to the Hereford succession. The Bohun who had led the opposition of 1297 was dead, but his son and successor was compelled in 1302 to marry the King's daughter Elizabeth, the widow of the Count of Holland, and to surrender his lands to the King to be regranted to himself and the heirs of his body under the Statute de Donis. This ensured an heir of the blood royal, or in the absence of such the escheat of the estates to the Crown. In the same year Bigod, the other great opposition leader, was obliged to surrender his estates under the same conditions, though his age made a marriage unnecessary, and the re-grant of his estates to himself and the heirs of his body meant nothing more than a life-grant with the reversion to the King on his death. Thus Edward thought to secure his power in the latter days of his reign by developing a policy imitated by his father from France, and carried to its logical conclusion by Edward III. The danger of establishing men of royal blood in strong territorial positions was not yet understood. It was for a later age to realise how it would produce disastrous civil wars, by placing possible claimants to the throne in a position to assert their

¹ *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 38-39.

² Hemingburgh, ii. 213-221.

real or imaginary rights.¹ To Edward, however, all must have seemed well on the political horizon at the beginning of the year 1306. Though his hitherto robust health was showing signs of decay, his mind was still active, and as he gazed back across the years of his reign he could see many difficulties conquered, much good work done. Wales had been incorporated in the English kingdom, the legal system of England had been developed if not perfected, the opposition to his rule in England had been broken up, and his Scottish opponents crushed. It was in this last calculation that he was wrong.

¹The relations of Edward I. and his Earls are best studied in Professor Tout's "The Earldoms under Edward I." in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new series, vol. viii. 129-155.

CHAPTER VI

THE SCOTTISH REBELLION AND THE LORDS ORDAINERS
(1306-1313)

ENGLISH rule in Scotland was always based on the flimsiest foundations. It needed but the personal ambition of a pretender to set all Scotland in a blaze. It was in the early months of 1306 that the fiery torch was kindled, and the kindler was Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick, who, since his father's death in 1304, had become head of the family and inheritor of his grandfather's claims. Though he had taken a considerable share in the subjugation of Scotland in 1304, and in reward had been confirmed in his father's estates, with remission of all debts due from him or his ancestors to the English Crown, he was conscious of the part he might play in the expulsion of the English. Before Stirling had surrendered to the King he had come to a secret understanding with William Lamberton, Bishop of St. Andrews—an ally of Wallace in the past but now on the English side—whereby each was to support the other in an undisclosed venture, seeming to point to designs by Bruce on the throne. Balliol was now no more than a cipher in Scottish politics, content to end his days in peace in France, but his nephew, John Comyn of Badenoch, heir-apparent to his claims, was possessed of greater determination and power. He had played a less vacillating part than Bruce, for though he had repudiated his submission of 1296, he had continued his opposition to Edward till the universal Scottish surrender in 1304. His greater consistency gave him a more important position than any other Scottish leader, and if Bruce had thoughts of the crown he would find Comyn a serious obstacle, whether as a rival claimant or as supporter of the English King. A meeting was arranged between the two at Bruce's suggestion in January or February, 1306,¹ and during

¹ Some chroniclers give February 10th, e.g. Hemingburgh, II. 245, others January 29th, e.g. Tretet, 407.

their conference in the Cloisters of the Grey Friars at Dumfries they came to blows. One account is that Comyn rejected Bruce's suggestions for the division of the spoils in the event of a successful rebellion, and his firm adherence to the English cause rendered his rival desperate in view of certain betrayal to Edward. Others declare that the proposal had been made by Bruce at an earlier meeting, and that he had discovered that Comyn had already betrayed him and that he was a marked man.¹ Be this as it may, Bruce fled from the building, leaving his rival wounded on the ground, where the monks found him and carried him into the church. thither they were followed by Bruce's esquires, who completed the murder on the very steps of the high altar. Whether the act was premeditated or not Bruce had committed himself. Leaping on Comyn's horse, he raised the men of Dumfries and compelled the royal justices, there in session, to retire. In a few days Scotland was once more in full rebellion, the castles began to surrender and none dared show sympathy with English rule. Once more an act of private revenge had opened the floodgates to national feeling.

Bruce lost no time in mustering his supporters. The followers of Comyn were cowed, and it was amid a large concourse of Scottish magnates that on Lady Day his murderer was placed on the royal chair at Scone and acclaimed King by his enthusiastic adherents.² When the news of these doings reached Edward on the south coast not a moment was lost. Supplies were ordered up to Scotland, Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, was commissioned to suppress the rebellion with men drawn from the northern counties, and the spiritual arm was invoked by inducing the Pope to excommunicate the rebel homicide.³ Edward, though the hand of death was upon him, had himself carried in a litter to London.⁴ He trusted to his son and heir to carry out the work in Scotland, which was now beyond his strength, and on Whitsunday Edward of Carnarvon was dubbed knight, and in turn conferred the same honour on 267 young men. At the subsequent banquet the King took a solemn oath to avenge the murder of Comyn, and the prince swore not to

¹ *Scalacronica*, 129-130, Fordun, 337-339. The two stories are well discussed in Sir James Ramsay's *Dawn of the Constitution*, 506-507.

² Hemingburgh, II. 247, *Flores Historiarum*, III. 129-130.

³ Bain, *Calendar of Documents*, II. 471-473, Foedera, I. 987.

⁴ *Flores Historiarum*, III. 131; Trevet, 408.

rest for two nights in the same place till he had reached Scotland at the head of a punitive expedition.¹ Accordingly a force started for the North but before it could get into action Aymer de Valence had reached Perth, and on June 19th had met and signally defeated Bruce's army at Methven.² This was enough to cripple the insurgents, and Bruce retired to the fastnesses of the Highlands, leaving the country unprotected from the savage retaliation of Prince Edward. Kintyre was his first refuge, but when the English captured the castle they found that he had fled, and he escaped ultimately to the island of Rathlin off the coast of Ireland. A large number of his adherents were captured. The Bishops of Glasgow and St. Andrews, Nigel Bruce his brother, and many others were taken: all implicated in the murder of Comyn were hanged. The wife and daughter of the fugitive, with other ladies, were taken and confined in English monasteries, though great respect and consideration was shown to the newly styled Queen, who was sister of the loyal Earl of Ulster, and was reported to have answered her husband's congratulations on her new title with taunts. Many large estates fell into the King's hands as forfeitures, and these he divided among his chief followers, thus giving them a personal interest in reducing the Scots to order.

Edward himself was far too ill to take an active part in the campaign, but he had slowly followed his son northwards in a horse litter, and in January, 1307, at Carlisle he met the last Parliament of his reign, which spent its time in repulsing the attempts of Papal agents to levy taxes in England. In the spring hostilities broke out afresh in Scotland. In February Alexander and Thomas Bruce, sent on an independent expedition by their brother, were captured and hanged, though the former was in orders. King Robert's position, however, soon began to improve. Returning from Rathlin he gained a slight success in a skirmish with some of Henry Percy's men, and his ally James Douglas took and burnt Castle Douglas: while in May he was able to defeat rather larger detachments under Aymer de Valence and the Earl of Gloucester. Gloucester, indeed, was besieged in Ayr, but Bruce, satisfied with his successes, raised the siege and retired to the fastnesses of the country. The news of these

¹ *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 131-132; *Trevet*, 408-409

² Hemingburgh, ii. 248-249, *Trevet*, 409-410, Barbour's *Bruce*, i. 36 45; Fordun, 341.

English reverses spurred Edward to action. He called out fresh levies, and prepared to lead them into Scotland in person. Discarding his litter, he strove to ride at the head of his troops, but it was only his indomitable spirit that enabled him to struggle on. On July 6th he reached Burgh-upon-Sands, and on the following morning died in his attendant's arms.¹ His death was concealed till his son, who had retired from the campaign, could come north. The new King having received the homage of the assembled barons, and having arranged for the conveyance of his father's corpse to Waltham, proceeded to Scotland, and there received the homage of such Scottish magnates as espoused the English cause, but he did not stay there. Since Bruce seemed little more than a fugitive who had won a few isolated successes, he was content to appoint Aymer de Valence guardian and lieutenant of Scotland, and to return to his southern kingdom.

Edward I. had died in harness; the son had no desire to emulate the father's example. This in itself would not condemn the new King, had it been a matter of reasoned policy. Unfortunately policy and argument had no place in guiding the second Edward's actions. It was weakness and a fatal love of postponing issues that led him to treat the Scottish problem as he did, and this was an evil augury for his southern kingdom. Never was England more in need of a strong man, one who would hold aloft the banner of centralisation and efficiency raised by Edward I., for many dangers threatened the nation and the kingship. A great change had been coming all through the latter part of the last reign, a change only partly obscured by the personal success of the great King. The baronage had deteriorated in quality; Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, was the sole survivor of those who had deserved their master's confidence, and their successors selfishly desired merely to capture the governmental system built up with such care during the last thirty years. The spirit betrayed in the opposition to Quo Warranto had found expression in the struggle for the confirmation of the charters, and though kept in check by the personality of the sovereign, it was there ready to seize the opportunity given by his weak successor. Signs were not wanting also that the Papacy would try to use baronial opposition to wring concessions

¹ Hemingburgh, II. 265-266, Trevel, 412-413.

from the King. Edward I. had been compelled to bow to Rome with regard to Papal tax gatherers, and nothing seemed more likely at the outset of his son's reign than that royal weakness would produce a repetition of the disgraceful exhibition of King John's days. To add to these troubles a spirit of disorder had been growing in the country at large. There was, no doubt, much real discontent in the country when Edward II. ascended the throne.

The true explanation of the discontent is to be found in the growing enervation of English manners, for the simplicity of the past was giving way to a far more luxurious mode of living. Even the Court of Edward I. had reflected this tendency. The knighting of Edward of Carnarvon, though the times were troublous, had been attended by all sorts of extravagance, and the swans, over which the King had taken a melodramatic vow of vengeance, were adorned with a network of gold which cost at least £4. Some years earlier at the marriage of his daughter to John of Brabant, Edward had spared no expense in the celebration of the festivities, which were attended by the nobles with retinues gorgeously attired, though the citizens of London were more careful of their outlay. Pageantry was on the increase, luxury grew far more quickly than the comforts of the home, and the magnates were eager to emulate their sovereign. They kept open house; all who cared might dine at their table, though in practice this assisted not the deserving poor but the hangers-on from whom the criminal classes were recruited.

Luxury reigned not only in food but also in dress. Men and women vied with one another in the adornment of their persons. The effect of the introduction of eastern wares was being felt, and an untutored love of colour led men to clothe their legs in two different shades. The long trailing dresses of the women defied the suggestions of convenience and suitability, and the love of finery was spreading even to the ranks of the middle classes.¹ Pageantry and display were not confined to the noble class, but spread to the towns. At the birth of Edward III. the London Fishmongers' Guild organised a magnificent procession to congratulate the Queen on the happy event. Clad in fine linen, embroidered with gold and bearing the arms of England and France, they rode in solemn procession to Westminster, with a pageant boat gaily adorned at the

¹ Political Songs (Camden Soc.), 153-155.

head of the cavalcade.¹ Worst of all the luxuries of the rich from the poor man's point of view were the large retinues of the nobles, made up as they were of unprincipled knaves, who gave themselves airs on the strength of their position. Many of the luxurious ideas of the age were doubtless borrowed from France, and they may perhaps date in England from the influx of foreigners in Henry III.'s reign, though they were considerably developed by the influence of Edward II.'s French Queen. The language of France was rapidly usurping the place of Latin in official records, a tendency seen to grow all through Edward I.'s reign even to the adoption of French in the law courts. That King had thought it necessary in 1301 to have a Papal letter translated into French so that his advisers might understand it,² and when his son came to take his coronation oath he used the French form prepared for those who were unacquainted with the Latin tongue. The Earl of Lancaster thought it necessary to have the terms of confederacy between himself and the revolted barons in 1321 drawn up in French, so that all might understand them,³ and even a prince of the Church had difficulty in using the Latin formulæ of his office, and relieved himself with ejaculations in French, and any writer who used the vulgar tongue explained that he did so because he addressed the "lude" or unlettered people.

The full effect of the luxury and demoralisation of the oncoming age is to be seen in the character of Edward II. Unlike his father he did not rise above the failings of the men around him, and he was therefore totally unfit to rule a nation suffering from degenerate tendencies. His father had done his best to train him for the position he was to fill, hoping to instil into his mind a conception of the responsibility of his position. He had trusted him to lead in battle and to negotiate, but the experiment had been disastrous. In 1306 the Prince had earned a stern reprimand from his father for his wanton cruelty in repressing the Scottish rising,⁴ and this had been preceded by a six months' seclusion from the Court for having invaded Bishop Langton's woods, and used very abusive

¹ *Annales Lond.*, 221.

² *Ibid.*, 107

³ *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 62.

⁴ Rushmore, 230. The King found it necessary to issue an explanation that some people had interpreted his orders for pacifying Scotland in too harsh and rigorous a manner (*Bain, Calendar of Documents*, ii 508)

and unprincely language towards him. This turbulent spirit, an unwholesome perversion of his father's violent temper, was not Edward's only failing. He sought pleasure to the exclusion of everything else. His tastes were extravagant, his morals were loose, he loved wine and fine clothing above fame and honour, and tempered his military campaigns with luxury and high living. His table was supplied by means of purveyance, and his presence tended to make bankrupt any district he visited. He was absolutely thriftless and wasted his money on his pleasures and in loose living. A confirmed gambler, he was particularly addicted to the game of cross and pile, or as it is now called, "pitch and toss," his wardrobe accounts showing numerous sums lost at this then aristocratic amusement¹. His love of hunting was an inheritance, but this led him to breed horses and train dogs with an earnestness he never devoted to statecraft.² His enthusiasm in this direction was at least instrumental in giving us the earliest known treatise on the chase, his chief huntsman, one William Twick, being inspired to compile a description of "*Le Art de Venerie*".³ Apart from the chase, Edward's letters betray a love of music,⁴ and it was said that Archbishop Reynolds won his favour by his skill in organising theatrical performances. His gravest vice in the eyes of his contemporaries was the way he neglected men of birth, and associated with clowns, singers, actors, boatmen, and sailors, preferring their company and their pursuits to any other. His father had been able in moments of relaxation to unbend towards even the humblest of his subjects. He had submitted with a good grace to be "heaved" on Easter Monday by his Queen's ladies, till he consented to pay £14 "to enjoy the King's peace"; he had even joined wager with the royal washerwoman that she would not ride a fiery steed to hounds and come in at the death, and had gladly paid his debt when the feat was accomplished.⁵ But at the same time he knew where to limit the familiarities which the easy customs of the age

¹ *The Antiquarian Repertory*, ii. 406.

² Letters of Prince Edward printed in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, i. 82-83,

97 ³ *The Art of Hunting*, by William Twick, Huntsman to Edward II. Edited by Miss A. Dryden (Northampton, 1908)

⁴ *Deputy Keeper's Report*, 9, Appendix ii. 249.

⁵ *Manners and Household Expenses*, p. lxx, quoting Wardrobe Book, 18 Edward I., ff. 456, 476

allowed. His son knew no restraint, and added to his love for low company an unfortunate affection for one particular favourite.

When not employed with his humbler friends, Edward had no thought for any one but his "good brother Peter". This upstart was one Peter of Gaveston, the son of a Gascon soldier, who had served Edward I. well.¹ He had been attached to the household of the Prince of Wales, but his influence over his master soon becoming apparent, he had been separated from the Prince, when the latter's quarrel with Langton caused his temporary disgrace. In vain young Edward begged his sister to use her influence that "Perot" might be allowed to rejoin him,² but on his restoration to favour he was allowed to take Gaveston with him to Scotland. The favourite, however, tiring of the campaign, returned home, together with some other youths, without the King's leave, for which he and his associates were arrested. Gaveston was banished, only to be recalled the moment that the old King died. He had learnt nothing from his punishment, but promptly reassumed his arrogant airs, and looked on the accession of his patron as a splendid opportunity for preferment. One of the first documents to which the new King appended the Great Seal was a gift of the Earldom of Cornwall to his favourite,³ and before the year was out he had betrothed him to his niece Margaret, sister of the Earl of Gloucester. Further, Gaveston was allowed to seize £50,000 deposited by the Bishop of Chichester at the Temple.

The favour thus shown to Gaveston may be regarded as dictated not only by personal affection but also by a desire to reverse the late King's policy. Edward II came to power as leader of the opposition, hence all his father's ministers were dismissed. Langton, who as Treasurer had refused payments to the Prince of Wales, and had dared to reprove his favourite, was not only removed from office, but his lands were seized and he himself cast into prison.⁴ The Chancellor was dismissed, and the other Bishop Langton, John of Chichester, took his place, even the very judges were displaced and their offices given to others. All who had been in opposition

¹ Arnold de Gaveston had been captured by the French in the Gascon wars, and from 1299 to his death in 1302 lived in England. *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, ii. 96-97. The place from which the family took its name is now spelt Gabaston.

² *Deputy Keeper's Report*, 9, Appendix ii. 248.

³ *Foedera*, ii. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 7; *Murimuth*, 9-10, *Hemmingburgh*, ii. 273.

to Edward I. were now in high favour at Court. Archbishop Winchelsea had been on good terms with the Prince of Wales before his father's death,¹ and his honourable return to England was immediately assured, while Anthony Bec, another opponent of Edward I., was restored to royal favour. In one particular, however, the new King did not abandon his father's policy. Shortly before his accession arrangements had been made for his marriage to Isabella of France, and to this he adhered, crossing to France early in 1308, and being married at Boulogne on January 25th, after having done homage to the King of France for Gascony and Ponthieu. A month later gorgeous festivities attended the coronation of the King and Queen,² the banquet being attended by representatives of the towns. When Edward and his bride appeared in London for the first time, the streets were decked so gaily as to give the city chronicler a foetaste of the new Jerusalem³

Thus early in the reign the foreshadowing of later troubles might be discerned. On the one side stood a Court party, consisting of those who were ready to minister to the King's pleasures and to exclude all others from both royal favour and a share in government; on the other, an opposition consisting of men who wanted a share, and more than a share, in privileges and emoluments. In the present case, however, personal considerations played a prominent part in the opposition to Edward II., and this centred on his favourite. Gaveston was not vicious in excess of his age. If he was greedy of gold like all whose position is precarious,⁴ he was an efficient soldier and a person of some charm of manner. He had a biting tongue, and his brilliance was looked upon as impudence by the English magnates who took themselves so seriously. At every mark of royal favour they grew more hostile. They were furious when the King left his favourite as regent during his short visit to France, "a monstrous thing," cried one chronicler, "that

¹ See a letter of the Prince of Wales to Winchelsea, *Deputy Keeper's Report*, No. 9, Appendix ii. 247.

² *Annales Paulini*, 260-261. Winchelsea nominated three bishops to perform the ceremony. He was too ill to attend himself, but he refused to allow the Archbishop of York to usurp his rights.

³ *Annales Lond.*, 152

⁴ That Gaveston realised the precarious nature of his good fortune is shown by the way he sent a portion of his easily acquired wealth abroad (Hemingsburgh, ii. 274).

one who but lately was an exile and banished from the kingdom should now be its governor and guardian,”¹ and all were scandalised when this low-born upstart was deputed to bear the crown before the King at the coronation. Feeling rose so high that Gaveston was considered guilty of every crime. The vilest interpretation of his friendship with the King is suggested by the language of the chroniclers, and when he overthrew some of the ancient nobility at a tournament held at Wallingford to celebrate his betrothal, it was more than hinted that his supporters were hireling knights, that the success was gained by underhand means.

Opposition grew apace, and when a great council of magnates met in March, 1308,² the temper of the assembly was soon apparent. Nothing, however, happened till after Easter, as some of the baronage had still to be won over. The Earl of Lincoln, by far the ablest of the magnates, had hitherto supported Edward and even approved of the elevation of Gaveston to the Earldom of Cornwall. Now, however, he was induced to join the opposition with Archbishop Winchelsea, who had just arrived in England. The Earl of Gloucester gave no support to his brother-in-law, but remained neutral, and Hugh Despenser was alone in championing the favourite. The barons had come armed to the Council, and warlike preparations were made throughout the country at their instigation. On his side the King ordered the fortifications of his castles to be strengthened, and seemed inclined to face the matter out. But Lincoln’s changed attitude had great effect, for he had been the trusted friend of Edward, who as Prince of Wales had turned to him in the days of his disgrace, while the fact that Gloucester would not support Gaveston, with whom he had shared the King’s confidence in the past, still further strengthened the hands of the opposition. A document was drawn up in which the barons enunciated the principle that, if the King did wrong, his lieges were bound by their oaths of fealty to lead him back into the right way. In face of this Edward dared not refuse the demand for Gaveston’s banishment, a punishment which his enemies considered far below his deserts. Compelled to resign his earldom, he was formally exiled by the King, while Winchelsea

¹ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 157.

² Parl. Writs, II. i. 18; the Commons were not summoned. See Stubbs, ii. 318, note 3.

declared him excommunicate should he be found in England after June 25¹

The King, determined to see the last of his friend, accompanied him in great state to Bristol, whence Gaveston sailed for Ireland to take up the government of that country. In August the baronage followed up this victory by obliging the King to dismiss those counsellors who had belonged to the Gaveston party, including Hugh Despenser and Nicholas Segrave, both of whom had been employed by Edward I. The King, however, was possessed of that obstinacy which so frequently accompanies weakness, and set to work to get Gaveston recalled. He wrote to the Pope to ask for the removal of the conditional excommunication, but only received from him good advice about keeping the peace. However, he relieved his feelings by showering gifts on his "brother Peter," who, the chronicler complained, proved as expensive to England as when he lived there, though in Ireland he won golden opinions by his generosity and the care with which he provided honours and lands for his friends.²

Meanwhile, baronial opposition was gaining popular support for reasons quite unconnected with Gaveston, and a full Parliament held at Westminster in April, 1309, drew up a long list of grievances in which the misdeeds of the royal officials played a conspicuous part. The right of purveyance was abused, the coinage was debased, the higher rate of the "new customs" was imposed—all grievances that had figured in the preceding reign. In addition it was declared that criminals were pardoned for money payments and that justice was delayed and hard to secure.³ Matters such as these bore more heavily on the commons than on the baronage, so that the demand for their redress suggests an alliance of lords and commons against the King, each with a separate cause of complaint. The King on his part sought only to restore Gaveston, and after one rebuff induced the Earl of Lincoln to act as mediator to such good effect, that in July, 1309, Gaveston returned, the Earl of Warwick being the only dissentient. It was at a Parliament at Stamford that the reconciliation of Gaveston and the barons took place, and in return the King gave a favourable answer to the petitions presented earlier in the year. Purveyors were to show their authorisa-

¹ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 155, 158-159, *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 33-34; *Annales Paulini*, 262-263.

² *Murimuth*, 11.

³ *Rot. Parl.*, 1, 443-445.

tion before they took anything for the King's use, and their procedure was to be regulated ; only the ancient customs were to be levied in the future, and other grievances were redressed. Peace seemed to be assured. But if Edward might have learnt a lesson, Gaveston was irrepressible. He flaunted himself before the baronage and drained the King of money, to such an extent that the Queen sent bitter complaints to her father. He invented insulting nicknames for his chief opponents, offending in particular the Earl of Lancaster, one of whose friends he had turned out of office.¹ Thomas of Lancaster, destined henceforth to assume the leadership of Gaveston's enemies, had hitherto played no prominent part in political affairs.² He was by far the most important of the Edwardian nobility, both in blood and extent of estates. Son of that Edmund designed by his father Henry III to be King of Sicily, he was half-brother to the Queen of France and uncle to the Queen of England. Earl of Lancaster, Derby, and Leicester, he commanded a host of retainers ready to do him service, and by his marriage with the De Lacy heiress he stood next in succession to the Earldoms of Lincoln and Salisbury. Brutal and overbearing, he was no more efficient statesman than Edward of Carnarvon, but his personality counted for more than his cousin's in a turbulent age. His factious ambition, caring nothing for the calls of patriotism, made him an ideal leader for a party without ideals and without any aim save personal aggrandisement.

Before the end of 1309 Earl Thomas had taken a definite line of hostility to Gaveston by refusing to attend a Parliament at York,³ his example being followed by the Earls of Lincoln, Warwick, Oxford, and Arundel. The writs had therefore to be re-issued and Westminster appointed as the place of meeting.⁴ The King apparently had hopes of a royalist party under the Earls of Lincoln and Warenne (who had been definitely reconciled to Gaveston), and Gloucester and Richmond, who were nearly related to the

¹ *Vita Edwards Secundi*, 161-162. The nicknames invented by Gaveston are variously reported; the best account is in Brut, 206-207, where they are given as follows. Gloucester was called "Horessone," Lincoln "Broste bely," Warwick "blac hounde of Arderne," Lancaster "Cherl". Warwick retorted that if he was a dog he would certainly bite Gaveston at the first opportunity (Lanercost, 216).

² *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 142, says that he led the opposition from the first, but the accounts of the other chroniclers discredit this statement.

³ Hemingburgh, ii. 275, October 18th, 1309.

⁴ Parl. Writs, II. 1. 40, 41.

Crown. But such hopes were vain. When the Council assembled the magnates, both clerical and lay, united in a petition to the King, in which they laid stress on the hopeless disorganisation of the kingdom. The King's extravagance compelled him to live by purveyance, though Parliament had made grants for his personal expenses and the war. They demanded therefore that Edward should consent to the appointment of a committee of barons for redress of grievances.¹ As a result, on March 16th, 1310, the royal seal was set to letters patent ordering the appointment of a commission for the reformation of the Government and royal household, to hold office till Michaelmas, 1311.² The election of this commission took place four days later in the Painted Chamber at Westminster, the electors being the twelve bishops and eight earls who had come to take part in the Council, together with two barons nominated by the rest. Archbishop Winchelsea, six bishops, eight earls,³ and six co-opted barons formed the committee thus elected, to be known henceforth as the Lords Ordainers, their duty according to their oath being "to make such ordinance as shall be to the honour and advantage of Holy Church, to the honour of the King and to his advantage, and that of his people according to the oath which the King took at his coronation".⁴ That the grievances were mainly financial is proved by the order that no gifts of land, money, or franchises were to be given to Ordainers, nor to anyone else without their consent, that all taxes were to be paid into the Exchequer direct, and that those foreign merchants who had farmed the taxes in the past should be arrested, and kept in confinement till they had given a full account of the monies that had passed through their hands.⁵ The poverty of the Crown is as much the key to Edward II's reign as it was to that of his father. The son had inherited a load of debt, and though this had been paid off by a

¹ The document is printed in *Liber Custumarum*, II. 198-199, and *Annales Lond.*, 168-169.

² *Foedera*, II. 105.

³ The Earls of Gloucester, Richmond (John of Brittany), Lincoln, Lancaster, Pembroke, Warwick, Hereford, and Arundel. The only two Earls not included in the list were Warenne and Oxford.

⁴ *Parl. Writs*, II. II 27.

⁵ These ordinances were issued by the King on August 2nd (*Foedera*, II. 113) but the original issue was dated "le Jeudi prochein devaunt la feste del Anunciacion," i.e. March 19th, on the authority of the bishops and barons (*Annales Lond.*, 172-173, where the document is given in full).

giant of the customs to the Italian creditors, more had to be borrowed from the Frescobaldi to carry on government. But the greediness of Gaveston and his friends compelled the King to have recourse to illegal "prises" and purveyances, and when prodigality to favourites was added to the financial burden of the Scottish war, bankruptcy was inevitable. The magnates understood the latter aspect of the financial danger, but they could not, or perhaps would not, grasp the real necessity which had placed the King in the hands of foreign moneylenders, so they embarked on a scheme of financial reform without any true appreciation of the problem.

The Ordainers were supreme, an oligarchy of barons had replaced the King and his favourites, but the country at large remained almost wholly unaffected. Though a chronicler might quote the constitutional maxim "what touches all must be approved by all,"¹ no representatives of towns, counties, or lesser clergy were called to assist at the Council which appointed the Ordainers, the election of whom had been so arranged as to place all power in the hands of the earls and bishops. The magnates had ignored the development of the past fifty years, and had gone back to the principles of the Provisions of Oxford. In 1310, however, there was no Simon de Montfort to draw a selfish party into the paths of patriotism. The Earl of Lincoln, who alone combined strength and honesty, was at the close of his life,² and Anthony Bec, who had taken no part in the opposition, soon followed Lincoln to the grave. The field was open for Thomas of Lancaster and the struggle of two selfish parties.

Although Gaveston's name had not been mentioned by the Ordainers, he was none the less the chief cause of their opposition, though he had retired from Court before the storm broke. He was summoned, however, as Earl of Cornwall, for an expedition to Scotland, which the King planned as a means of escape from London. But the Earl of Gloucester was the only Ordainer who obeyed the summons, Warenne and Gaveston being the only other Earls in the army. Once escaped from the vigilance of the Ordainers, Edward defied them by appointing a well-known member of the Court

¹ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 170.

² He died the following year, 1311, before the final deliberations of the Ordainers were published.

party, John de Seguave, Warden of Scotland, and by promoting his old tutor Bishop Reynolds to the post of Chancellor¹. From September to July Edward was in the North, pretending to supervise the useless campaign, while the Ordainers were drawing up their programme of reform. The country generally seems to have been in a terribly disturbed state, and in London disorder was increasing so alarmingly² that the prospect of a turbulent Parliament at the Blackfriars was very disconcerting to the City officials. The King was at Westminster, the barons were in and about London, a collision of armed forces might be expected at any moment, so special Ordinances were issued from the Guildhall for guarding the gates day and night. To the Parliament at the Blackfriars all three Estates were summoned,³ but merely as onlookers. The baronial demands were contained in thirty-five articles of varying importance and interest. Some were meant to remedy the lax administration of the law and the mismanagement of the royal finances, others had more constitutional bearing, demanding that officials should be appointed only with the consent of the baronage, and should be bound by oaths taken in Parliament—a forecast of ministerial responsibility to the national assembly—that Parliament should be held once or twice every year, that the King should not make war, leave the country, or alter the coinage without the leave of the barons in Parliament. The grievances were familiar, but the remedies established new principles and were directed towards the limiting of the royal power by Parliament. Much depends upon the definition of the word parliament. To us it means the three Estates, to the Ordainers it certainly meant the baronage. The whole tone of the articles was oligarchical, and breathed the spirit of a narrow clique. To the rank and file the clauses of most interest were those of least importance, which dealt with the personal and momentary grievances associated with Gaveston and the other royal favourites. The Earl of Cornwall was to suffer perpetual banishment, and with him were to go all the other members of the Court party. All Gascons were expelled, together with ~~the~~ Frescobaldi, as the authors

¹ *Foedera*, II. 106, *Parl. Writs*, II. ii. 29.

² *Memorials of London*, 86-89, *Annales Lond.*, 175-176. "Roreres" and ruffians terrorised the streets in spite of the efforts of Richer de Resham, the Mayor.

³ *Parl. Writs*, II. ii. 37-39.

of royal loans, and many officials were deposed. The Ordainers meant to make a clean sweep of their opponents.¹

Edward met the demands in his usual vacillating manner, putting off the evil day by an unnecessary pilgrimage to Canterbury, and when the Ordinances were actually laid before him, trying to compromise. He offered to agree to any terms, however inconvenient to himself, so long as his "good brother Peter" were left unmolested. To this the magnates could give but one answer, and those who surrounded the King finally got him to yield all the points at issue.² On September 27th, 1311, the Ordinances were published at Paul's Cross in the presence of the Ordainers. Three days later members of the King's Council, including the Earl of Gloucester and Hugh Despenser, who had probably used their influence to induce Edward to yield, attended to declare the King's consent, and on October 11th the royal seal was affixed. Their master had not the slightest intention of keeping his word. The favourite had been left in the North, safe behind the fortifications of Bamborough Castle, but on hearing of the determined opposition to him he fled abroad. Turned out of France, where he was unpopular owing to the hostility of the Queen of England, he found refuge in Flanders, but by the end of November, 1311, he was again in England, as a royal edict, dictated probably by the Ordainers, ordered search to be made for him in the western counties, where he was said to be lurking. The King brought him secretly to Windsor, and carried him off once more to the North. There, it is said, he even opened negotiations with Robert Bruce to beg for an asylum in Scotland for the banished Earl, in the meanwhile defying his enemies by proclaiming throughout England that Gaveston, having been illegally banished, had returned to England by the King's command.³ This was the signal to arms. Lancaster, Pembroke, Hereford, Arundel, and Warwick marched on London to concert plans. The King sent almost daily letters to the Mayor and Aldermen to hold the City for him, and deny admittance to the confederated Earls, but in the end had to agree to their entry. At St Paul's they swore to maintain the Ordinances, the Earl of Gloucester re-

¹ Henry de Beaumont was deprived of the Isle of Man, which was to be given to "a true Englishman," and even his sister Lady de Vescy was to leave the Court.

² The Ordinances are to be found in *Rot. Parl.*, i. 281-286, *Liber Custumarum*, i. 682-690, *Annales Lond.*, 198-202.

³ January, 1312; *Foedera*, ii. 153-154.

fusing to join the five allies, though he agreed to abide by the result of their action Pembroke and Warenne promptly led their men northwards to capture the favourite, and Lancaster followed. The King fled before the advancing forces, abandoning Newcastle and Tynemouth, and leaving the unfortunate Queen, who was expecting her confinement, to fall into the hands of the enemy. Lancaster had no quarrel with Isabella, and comforted her with a promise to know no rest till he had brought Gaveston to justice. As a last resort Gaveston took refuge in Scarborough Castle, while the King went to York, where he consoled himself by issuing numerous deeds of gift in favour of his friend. But the end was near. Pembroke and Warenne laid siege to Scarborough, while Lancaster protected them from any attack in the rear by establishing himself near Knaresborough. The castle, though immensely strong, was insufficiently manned, and at the end of three weeks Gaveston had to surrender, but on conditions. The Earls of Surrey and Pembroke and Henry Percy, in command of the baronial forces, set their seals on May 19th, 1312, to an agreement whereby Gaveston delivered himself into their hands to be brought before an assembly of the magnates, his safety being assured till the first of August.¹ The Earl of Pembroke undertook to escort him southwards, but at Deddington, not far from Banbury, the Earl left his prisoner in the priest's house while he rode over to his manor of Bampton to visit his wife. On the morning of June 10th Gaveston was roused from slumber to find the house surrounded by the Earl of Warwick and his men, who dragged him off half-dressed, treating him as a robber and not as an earl; "he who had been wont to ride on horseback, was now compelled to go afoot"². Earl Guy carried off his captive to his own Castle of Warwick, where on June 19th the Earls of Lancaster, Hereford, and Arundel arrived, and without delay took him out to Blacklow Hill, a spot within the palatinate jurisdiction of Thomas of Lancaster, and there had him publicly executed as a traitor before a large concourse.³

¹ These terms were published by the three baronial leaders. See the document in *Annales Lond.*, 204-206.

² *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 178.

³ In *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 43-44, it is stated that Gaveston was tried before two judges, William Inge and Henry Spigurnel, and condemned to death in due form. No other chronicle mentions this.

It is evident from the chroniclers' accounts that the magnates were quite aware of the seriousness of their lawless action. The Earl of Warwick had seized Gaveston illegally, and had deliberately violated an agreement binding in honour, if not in law, all who were banded together against the favourite. Yet he took care to refuse to sanction the murder by his presence, and ordered the victim's body to be removed outside his lands, when brought into his town by four compassionate shoemakers. Even those who had ordered the execution had stood aside so as not actually to witness the deed. Lancaster, however, was the man on to whom most of the responsibility was shifted, as it was on his territory that the final act in the drama took place. Pembroke alone could protest innocence with semblance of truth. He had begged the Earl of Gloucester to interfere so soon as he had heard of the affair of Deddington, to be informed that Gloucester was privy to Warwick's action. He had even laid the matter before the University and civic authorities at Oxford, who were too wise to interfere. But though he declared that his honour was at stake, none took notice, many being of opinion that his actions were not above suspicion.¹ The truth was, all wished for Gaveston's death, but no one cared to be too deeply implicated in his murder. The blame was mainly to be fastened on the apparently willing Lancaster, whose royal blood was likely to save him from punishment.

Though the country's joy at the death of the favourite is depicted in glowing language by one chronicler, and is commemorated in political poems,² there were signs of resentment at the high-handed action of the magnates. The King was by no means devoid of supporters, and the Court party, now led by Hugh Despenser, trembling at the possibility of a similar fate, was ready to urge the King to any extreme action. The Earls of Pembroke and Warenne had rallied to the King, ostensibly in disgust at the cold-blooded murder, though it was natural for all, not too deeply implicated, to rejoin the King when the main object for which they had striven was attained. Encouraged by his favourable reception by the Londoners

¹ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 178-179. It was at least suspicious that he had left Gaveston so near Warwick with so inadequate a guard.

² Political Songs (Camden Society), 258-261. The Songs were written in Latin and so were evidently meant for the delectation of the lettered and not for the poorest classes.

in July,¹ Edward issued prohibitions against unlawful assemblies and disturbance of the peace, and commissioned Warenne to arrest Henry Percy, who alone of the three guarantors of the Scarborough agreement seems to have acquiesced in the infringement of his promise.² Orders were sent out to the sheriffs all over the country to ascertain the number of armed men that could be relied on should the King need them, some of whom were ordered to muster at Westminster for the opening of Parliament on August 20th. Edward paid a special visit to Dover, where he re-fortified the castle, extracted oaths of allegiance from the barons of the Cinque Ports and despatched Pembroke to France for help.³ In London great precautions were taken to keep the Ordainers out, the gates being closed with special care at sundown and an extra strong watch mustered.⁴ On their side the three Earls were marching upon the city, but finding the gates closed, established themselves in considerable strength between Ware and Wheathampstead in Hertfordshire.

Thus King and Ordainers stood armed against each other, neither anxious to strike the first blow, neither quite sure enough of their own strength to provoke an armed encounter. But the vast majority of Englishmen cared not a jot for a quarrel which did not concern them. Edward might be a bad king, but the barons promised no better government, so the great thing to achieve was a peaceful issue of the strife. The Earl of Gloucester strove to act the part of peacemaker. He urged the King to look upon the magnates as allies not as enemies, to which the King retorted that their actions were those of enemies and should be treated accordingly. The barons on their side justified their action to Gloucester, reiterating the principle that the King had obligations as well as privileges, and that for him to ignore them was to absolve his feudatories from their oaths of allegiance.⁵ If to modern ears the doctrine sounds democratic, by its authors it was not intended to extend beyond their own restricted class, for the welfare of the community at large did not enter into their calculations. Presently Lewis, Count of Dreux, accompanied by some French lawyers, came over in answer to Pembroke's embassy, and

¹ *Annales Lond.*, 208-209.

² *Foedera*, II. 173.

³ *Annales Lond.*, 209-210.

⁴ *Memorials of London*, 102-104.

⁵ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 185-188; *Annales Lond.*, 210.

certain Papal envoys, at the head of whom was the Cardinal of St. Prisca, also joined the forces striving for peace. Negotiations were continued into December,¹ the revolted nobles suggesting conditions of peace, and the King using the French lawyers at Court to produce a reasoned answer to their demands:² but this was too reminiscent of Henry III.'s action in face of baronial opposition to be effective. Finally, on December 20th, 1312, terms were signed, the Earls promising submission and in return receiving full pardon from the King.³ This pacification, however, was not the end of Edward's troubles. On the ground that they had not received a proper summons from the King, Lancaster and Warwick refused to agree to any amnesty on the Gaveston quarrel, and protested at any protection being given to the Court party.⁴ But to most men they seemed to be just as selfish and corrupt as their opponent. Moreover, there was a revulsion of feeling in the King's favour when on November 13th, 1312, his wife bore him a son and heir. No event hitherto had ever produced such manifestations. London kept holiday for a week in transport of delight,⁵ and the event had an excellent effect in helping Edward to forget his vain regrets for Gaveston, and in stiffening for a time his deplorably weak character.⁶

Nearly a year elapsed before a final reconciliation took place, and during this period the King had taken his wife over to France, and had been absent from his kingdom from May 23rd to July 16th, 1313, in spite of the protests of the Earls, who urged that his absence was most undesirable in view of the disturbed state of the country, and the threatening attitude of Robert Bruce. The Scots were ravaging the North, everywhere men were meeting for seditious purposes under cover of taking part in tournaments; government there was none, and many thought that Edward had gone to France to avoid meeting Parliament which he had summoned for July 8th,⁷ and which, tired of waiting for him, had dispersed before

¹ Parl. Writs, II. 55, 56, 57, 58, 59.

² *Annales Lond.*, 210-215.

³ Including the Gaveston tragedy. The official terms are printed in *Annales Lond.*, 221-225; *Foedera*, II. 191.

⁴ They had been represented by envoys at the conference. Hereford was present in person. Document setting forth the Earls' demands in *Annales Lond.*, 225-229.

⁵ *Annales Lond.*, 220-221.

⁶ *Trokelowe*, 79.

⁷ Parl. Writs, II. I. 94, etc.

his return In September, King and magnates came face to face in the third Parliament called during the year 1313, to which all three Estates were summoned,¹ and to which also Edward had begged the King of France to send his brother Louis, who had proved so successful in earlier negotiations.² The King in his weak obstinacy was very loth to pardon those enemies who were now willing to make submission, but thanks to his brother-in-law's influence, and a warning that public opinion demanded it, he at length consented to a reconciliation, which took place in Westminster Hall. The Earls of Lancaster, Hereford, and Warwick confessed their past misdeeds, the King in turn granting them a full and sufficient pardon and the redress of their grievances³ Two banquets celebrated the occasion, one given by the King, the other by the Earl of Lancaster.

¹ Parl. Writs, II. i. 100-115.

² Foedera, ii 226

³ Parl. Writs, ii. 66-70, *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 194-195, Trokelowe, 80-81.

CHAPTER VII

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF EDWARD II. (1313-1327)

CHIEF among the many reasons for the reconciliation of Edward and his baronage in 1313 was the threatening attitude of the Scots. Busy over their private quarrels, Englishmen had ignored the steady progress of Robert Bruce, though of late the King had been borrowing largely on the excuse of the northern war. In June, 1308, Edward had issued writs for the assembly at Carlisle, in the following August, of a large army which was to be supported by a fleet from the Cinque Ports. But if Edward I.'s arrangements were followed his spirit was absent, and before the date of assembly the whole muster was countermanded.¹ In a vain attempt to keep up his dignity Edward declared that he would make no truce with Robert Bruce, but at the same time he gave leave to his wardens in Scotland to make a truce if they could.² Throughout the years 1308 and 1309 Bruce made steady, though not startling progress, being assisted by the hesitating action and contradictory orders of the English Government.³ In September, 1309, as we have seen, Edward appeared in Scotland, but achieved little, and his distractions at home encouraged Bruce to act more definitely on the offensive, and to ravage the border in short but harassing raids, from which he did not desist even when the King was at York and Gaveston was being besieged at Scarborough.⁴ With his exchequer replenished by blackmail levied on the northern counties of England,⁵ Bruce became more enterprising, and began to retake some of the more important Scottish fortresses still in English hands. He captured both Roxburgh and Edinburgh in the spring of 1314.⁶

¹ Parl. Writs, II. i. 373-377.² Bain, *Calendar of Documents*, III. 9³ *Ibid.*, III. 19, 21.⁴ Lanercost, 216-217.⁵ See e.g. Lanercost, 222⁶ *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 45, Barbour's *Bruce*, II. 258-267, Lanercost

At last news came to England that Sir Philip de Mowbray had agreed to surrender Stirling Castle, the most important stronghold still maintained, if he was not relieved before Midsummer Day. The King could not refuse such a challenge, it is doubtful whether the chivalry of England would have allowed him to do so, and great preparations were made for the muster of an imposing army to punish the Scottish rebels. A Twentieth and a Fifteenth were voted by Parliament, but an attempt to secure a grant from Convocation failed, as the members protested against being summoned at the King's command, and Archbishop Reynolds was compelled to withdraw his citation.¹ Funds were sorely needed, for not only was the feudal levy called out from both England and Ireland, but also foot-soldiers were to be enlisted in the English counties, in North and South Wales, and in Ireland, to serve the King for pay, though in some cases the localities were to provide the wages.² In spite of their brave words in the past, certain of the Ordainers led by Lancaster refused to follow the King, though their contingents were allowed to serve. In all some 22,000 men were summoned for pay, but the fact that the witts had to be repeated in May with special emphasis suggests that they too were not very willing to muster. Though the army assembled at Wark must have been far below the 100,000 men who the Scottish chronicles declared were defeated later at Bannockburn, Edward obviously tried to gather a larger army than any that had hitherto invaded Scotland.³ Speed, even more than numbers, was needed, as the day appointed for the surrender of Stirling was approaching, but Edward showed himself quite inefficient as a general. He overloaded his men with impedimenta of all kinds, and overmarched and underfed both men and horses. The baggage train in single file would have covered, we are told, a distance of twenty leagues, for he found it necessary to have on a campaign all the luxuries in which he delighted at home, even to the gold and silver vessels of his table. This inability to realise that a campaign was not a somewhat pro-

¹ Parl. Writs, II. i. 122-124.

² E.g. in the case of Bristol the town was to pay (Parl. Writs, II. i. 435).

³ For discussion of the numbers see Round, *Commune of London* (London, 1899), Appendix C., 289-301, who suggests 30,000 men of all arms, *The Bruce*, ed. by W. M. Mackenzie (London, 1909), where 20,000 is given as the probable figure, and J. E. Morris, *Bannockburn* (Cambridge, 1914), who gives about 17,500.

longed picnic had a disastrous effect on the morale of the army, which was allowed to plunder without discrimination as it advanced.¹

It was only on the eve of St. John Baptist's Day that the English army approached Stirling, and got into touch with the Scots, who had hitherto offered no resistance. The defending forces were drawn up so as to command the road running northwards from Falkirk, and were protected by a forest, the New Park, which covered Stirling to the South. Below them ran the Bannock Burn, on their left the ground fell away from the ridge on which they were posted to the flat ground of the Carse, which extended to the Forth. Their front was still further protected by pits or "pottis" dug at frequent intervals, and covered over with brushwood, a trap into which charging cavalry might fall.² The English van as it advanced on Sunday, June 23rd, crossed the Bannock Burn and fought a serious skirmish with the Scots under Robert Bruce himself. Henry Bohun was slain, and Gloucester, who with Hereford commanded the van, was unhorsed. Meanwhile Clifford and Beaumont with a small body of horse made a wide detour to the right, turning the Scots' position, but when a clear way lay between themselves and Stirling, they spied Moray in command of what was now the Scottish rear-guard, and prepared to attack rather than to effect a formal relief of the castle. The fight was fierce and long, and ended in the discomfiture of the English, some of whom fled to the castle, others back to the main body of the army. The preliminary engagement had gone sadly against the English.

Influenced, doubtless, by the strength of the Scottish position as approached from the South, Edward determined to wheel round the Scottish left flank, and crossing the Burn he established his camp on the Northern side of the stream, just in the bend which it makes before joining the Forth. Here on the following morn-

¹ *Flores Historiarum*, iii 158

² Barbour's *Bruce*, i. 286. Lanercost, 226, seems to think there was only a stream between the two forces, while Baker, 7, and *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 205, elaborate the "pottis" into a ditch dug by the Scots. See J. E. Morris, *Bannockburn*, 61-63. The truth is probably that Baker and the *Vita* got mixed up between the "pottis," which as a matter of fact played no part in the battle at all, and the Bannock Burn in which so many of the English were slain when fleeing after the battle.

ing he arrayed his men for battle on the level ground,¹ but it was on a weary and disorganised army that the honour of England hung. Gloucester and Hereford were quarrelling as to precedence,² and the rank and file had had no rest, for the burn must have taken most of the night to cross, and this amid constant fear of an attack from the Scots under cover of darkness.³ The latter had wheeled round to the left to face the enemy, still being in four brigades, with the King in command of the reserves. All were dismounted, and the three main divisions advanced to the attack in "schiltron" formation. The English were without order, and without any real leader. The men-at-arms were all mounted and massed together in nine ill-defined brigades with Gloucester in command of the left wing. To meet the advancing Scots they charged forward, but before the check came Bruce's well-trained men had halted and received the charge packed together in a wall of spears. It was Falkirk over again, but Falkirk with a difference. There was no Edward I. to control the disorderly English cavalry, and bring the archers up to combine the missile weapon with shock tactics. Archers there were in the English army, but most had been placed in the rear, while those thrown out as a skirmishing line on the right front of the English were drawn off still farther to the right to allow the main body to charge. In this position they might have done yeoman service for their side by shooting into the Scottish left flank, but Bruce had foreseen this danger, and a body of horse, held in readiness for the purpose, took the archers' wing by surprise and drove it from the field.⁴ Meanwhile the battle was being bitterly fought. The first charge repulsed, the Scots resumed their advance, only to reform on the defensive once more when the next charge came. Thus slowly they pushed back the English towards the marshy borders of the Bannock Burn. To add confusion to the already confounded, the

¹ The traditional site of the battle is on the banks of the Burn where Bruce was posted on June 23rd, but this view has been controverted by Mr. W. M. Mackenzie in "The Real Bannockburn" (*Proceedings of the Glasgow Archaeological Society*, 1908-9), and in the *Battle of Bannockburn* (Edinburgh, 1913), and supported by Dr. Morris in his *Bannockburn* (Cambridge, 1914). For a justification of the traditional theory, see Sir Herbert Maxwell's article in *Scottish Historical Review* (April, 1914). It seems, however, that the last word in the controversy has not yet been spoken.

² *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 204, *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 158.

³ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 202-203; Baker, 7.

⁴ Barbour's *Bruce*, i. 324-326.

main body of English archers in the rear tried to reach the Scottish pikemen over the heads of their fellows, but while only a few Scots were wounded, many English fell stricken from behind by the missiles of their comrades.¹ The battle was fast becoming a rout. Their escape cut off, the English were slaughtered in thousands on the banks of the Burn, while Edward himself, though he had taken no active part in the battle, was in considerable danger, and had to defend himself against the attacks of some Scottish knights.² Closely pressed by a detachment of the enemy, he made his undignified way to Dunbar, whence he escaped by boat to Berwick. Thus ended the disastrous fight of Bannockburn. Neglect of the archers had given the day to the Scottish pikemen, who could not have resisted the combined attack of the archers and the heavy horsemen. It was well for the English chronicler to bewail the pride and insolence which had caused the defeat,³ for it was just these qualities which had lost the day. The mailed knight was no longer self-sufficing. Courtrai had proved it at the expense of the French, Morgarten was about to emphasise it at the expense of the Hapsburgs.

Scottish patriots had good reason to rejoice at their signal victory, and their maidens celebrated the event in taunting song addressed to their Southern enemies.—

“ Maydenes of Engelonde, sare may ye mourne,
For tynte ye have youre lemnans atte Bannokis bourne
With hevalowe.
What wente ye Kyng of Engelande
[To] have gete Scotlande
With rumbelowe.”⁴

The defeat of Edward's army was indeed the crowning act of Bruce's successful struggle, but it was not followed by peace. Though Scottish delegates appeared at the Parliament held at York in September, and the King appointed the Dean of York and others to treat of peace, nothing was settled save that by an exchange of prisoners the Earl of Hereford, who had been captured after Bannockburn, was released in return for the Scottish Queen and the Bishop of

¹ Baker, 9.

² Scalacronica, 142.

³ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 207.

⁴ Harleian MS. 2279, f. 104vo. Cf Brut, 208.

Glasgow, who had been so long in confinement in England. Still the borderland was at the mercy of the Scots, who met little effective resistance from the Earl of Pembroke and the levies of the northern counties. Fire and sword did their work, and the registers of the northern bishoprics bear witness to the annual devastations,¹ the short temporary respites, bought by the inhabitants of the borderland in spite of the King's prohibitions, being of small avail. To the best of their ability the northern bishops tried to organise their defences,² but though the King of the Scots was compelled in 1315 to raise the siege of Carlisle owing to the heroic defence of Sir Andrew de Haicla,³ he sat down undaunted before Berwick early in the following year, and reduced the garrison to such straits that the governor wrote to the King that unless relief was immediately forthcoming he must yield for lack of food. In February, 1315, an army was ordered to Newcastle, but it was never used owing to the dissensions between the King and the Earl of Lancaster, who had succeeded Pembroke in the command of the border. Disastrous expeditions into Scotland and disturbances at home induced Edward to appeal to Rome, and Papal nuncios were sent to procure peace between the two countries. Though Bruce gave audience to the embassy, the negotiations broke down over the question of his right to be addressed as King of Scotland,⁴ and before the envoys' return Berwick had been captured by the Scots, Edward failing in another attempt to collect an English army in 1316.

While this desultory warfare was proceeding in the border counties, Edward, Earl of Carrick, brother of the King of Scots, had been campaigning in Ireland, where he had been promised the crown by the great Ulster family of the O'Neills. This, together with an untimely revolt in Wales, diverted the attention of the English from Scotland.⁵ In Wales the Earl of Hereford managed to subdue the rising by November, 1316, without much trouble,⁶

¹ *Northern Registers*, 224-225, 233-234, 237-238, 240-241.

² *Ibid.*, 246-247.

³ His name was really Hartly, a Westmorland family. See J. E. Morris's article in *Cumberland and Westmorland Arch. Soc. Transactions*, new series, iii. 307.

⁴ *Papal Letters*, ii. 429; *Foedera*, ii. 340; *Baker*, 9-10.

⁵ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 215-218; *Trokelowe*, 91-92.

⁶ *Foedera*, ii. 283-285, 301; *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 339-340.

but in Ireland the war continued amidst terrible cruelties committed both by the English under the Earl of Ulster and by the Scottish invaders and their Irish allies¹. In the autumn of 1316 King Robert himself crossed over from Scotland, but the campaigning had little influence on the fortunes of the Anglo-Scottish war. Robert soon had to return, and Scottish interference in Ireland ended with the defeat and death of Edward Bruce near Dundalk in October, 1318.²

The year 1319 witnessed an attempt of the English to regain Berwick, but mismanagement and dissension again undermined their strength. The feudal tenants, summoned first for June 10th, and later put off till a month after Midsummer Day, responded ill to the sovereign's affectionate call, and the King had to rely mainly on eight or nine thousand paid troops, including light horse, archers, cross-bowmen and Welsh foot.³ Berwick was invested both by sea and land, and siege engines were brought up, but an attempt to take the town by assault failed, and when it was known that a Scottish army had slipped across the Border and had defeated the Archbishop of York's hastily gathered forces at Myton-upon-Swale, the project was abandoned, for Edward could not afford to allow an enemy to be established in force in his already distracted kingdom.⁴ In view of the dangers which now threatened the borderland with increased force, English envoys were sent to Scotland, and a truce for two years was signed on December 21st, 1319. In the following year further negotiations were opened for a final peace, but the end was not yet. The Nemesis of history was at hand. Edward I had used the internal divisions of Scotland to reduce a proud and independent people, it was now Scotland's turn to take a hand in English politics, and support one faction against the other in the southern kingdom.

In the year 1313 the chronicler had cried "The King has ruled six full years and has hitherto done nothing praiseworthy or memorable,"⁵ after Bannockburn the remark might have been made

¹ *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, 274, 282.

² Barbour's *Bruce*, ii. 48-76, 115-123; *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, 281-282.

³ Parl. Writs, II. i. 513-516; Bain, *Calendar of Documents*, iii. 125-126.

⁴ Barbour's *Bruce*, ii. 88-110, Scalacronica, 148, Melsa, ii. 331-333, Trokelowe, 103-104, *Northern Registers*, 295, *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 242, 244; *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 187-190, Brut, 211-212.

⁵ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 191.

with even greater truth. No success had attended his political schemes, disaster had overtaken his warlike endeavours, and men began to emphasise their disgust at their own evil time by singing the praises of his predecessor.¹ But the decay in English national life was not due to royal inefficiency alone. Seeds of disorder had been abundantly sown before the death of Edward I., they had merely germinated undisturbed by his son. A spirit of insubordination was abroad, the yeoman and the knight, the baron and the earl, the lowest and the highest, all joined in insensate rivalry to surpass their neighbours in luxury and vain show. To this degeneration one of the most acute, if not the most unbiased, of contemporary writers attributed the defeat of Bannockburn,² and his gloomy outlook was a natural result of the lawlessness of the times. As soon as the King had marched to the relief of Stirling, disorders had broken out in England. Bands of malefactors, knights as well as those of lesser degree, harried the country, committing assaults and murders, breaking parks and hunting deer, so that the supine sheriffs of the counties had to be reinforced by the appointment of special conservators of the peace.

The testimony of the chroniclers and the records of the law courts both attest the disturbed state of the country. In 1315 a retainer of the Earl of Lancaster, thinking to please the King, gathered some 800 men and attacked his master's strongholds, ultimately to be besieged by the Earl's men in one of his lairs and slain.³ In the following year the commons of Bristol complained of the privileges claimed by the governing body of fourteen ancients, and when a royal court of inquiry proved itself entirely in the hands of the fourteen, a popular rising drove the judges from the town after a free fight in which twenty men lost their lives. When the Earl of Pembroke was sent to reason with them, the men of Bristol demanded a free pardon and redress of grievances! There was nothing for it but to besiege the recalcitrant city. Maurice de Berkeley held the sea approaches, while Bartholomew de Badlesmere attacked by land, and the townsmen were soon compelled to surrender, but the royal authority had been set at naught and an

¹ See for instance two poems of the time in Political Songs (Camden Society), 241-250, and the "Commendatio Lamentabilis in Transitu Magni Regis Edwardi" in Stubbs' *Chronicles of Edward I. and Edward II.*, vol. ii. 3-21.

² *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 207.

³ *Ibid.*, 214-215, *Annales Lond.*, 236-237.

evil example had been given to the rest of the kingdom¹ Bristol indeed was not the only centre of disturbance. London itself was seething with disorder. Ruffians were terrorising the citizens, and robberies, assaults, and outrages of all kinds were everyday occurrences. These "rōreies" or "rifflers," the ancestors of the "mohawks" of the eighteenth century, were so powerful that when in 1310 the Mayor, Richer de Resham, began to commit to prison all night-walkers and disturbers of the peace, one of his victims led a revolt against his authority and obtained his deposition.²

In ecclesiastical matters, too, there was evidence of decay. Men's minds had been drawn to observe clerical depravity by the proceedings against the Knights Templars during the first part of the reign Philip le Bel, King of France, originated the movement, seeing a splendid chance of wiping out his debts to the Order, and at the same time enriching his treasury with their spoils. The Pope was his humble servant, but he desired the English King's aid too in suppressing the Knights who had done such yeoman service in the Holy Land. Edward, by no means anxious to help, replied by referring the charges brought by Philip against the Templars to his prelates and other magnates, who declared them totally incredible.³ In answer to this rebuff Philip appealed to the Pope, who despatched two nuncios to England, to bid the King arrest all the Knights Templars in his country. Though the Papal request was granted, and the sheriffs were bidden to carry out the arrests, Edward sent a strongly worded letter to the Pope, assuring him that everywhere in England men spoke well of the Knights.⁴ At the same time fresh orders for arrest were issued, and the Pope was informed that his wishes with regard to the Templars would be fully carried out. Nothing could illustrate with greater clearness the weakness of Edward II. with regard to the papacy. His father's foolish invocation of Papal interference forced him to bargain with the papacy, and against his better judgment to sacrifice the Templars as the price of Papal concessions. In August, 1308, orders were issued from Avignon as to the procedure to be followed in bringing the accused to justice, coupled with a much-needed justification of Philip the

¹ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 219-223; *Foedera*, ii. 210, 225.

² *Annales Lond.*, 175-176. Some of the cases tried as a result of the perambulation are to be found in *Memorials of London*, 86-89.

³ October 30th, 1307; *Foedera*, ii. 10.

⁴ *Foedera*, ii. 18-19, 24.

Fair's motives, and a Bull followed ordering the King to hold all Templar possessions till the Papal commissioners were able to take them over. Still proceedings were delayed, and the Knights under arrest were at first treated with unusual leniency and courtesy. In March, 1309, the lands belonging to the Order were valued, though in certain districts this was for a time evaded¹ In September Papal inquisitors arrived in England, and those members who had been arrested were ordered to be examined in York, Lincoln, and the Tower of London, but many were still at large.² Similar orders were issued for Scotland and Ireland³ The trials lasted till July, 1311, and were long and confused. In the end it was decided to refer the matter to the Pope, "as the accused were not found to be either wholly guilty or wholly innocent".⁴ If this non-committal decision was given after so much Papal pressure, it may well be supposed that the charges were grossly exaggerated, though if the accusations were true, few of the most heinous vices were not practised by the Knights. Their opinions were heretical, their ceremonies blasphemous and obscene. With childish spite they had devised insults levelled at the Sacred Mysteries and Emblems of the Christian Faith, practised idolatry, cat worship, and the grossest forms of immorality, and worst of all kept their ceremonies secret.⁵ Were it not known with what facility accusations of the most unfounded nature were made and believed in this credulous age, the indictment would prove the Templars to be the most abandoned of men; but it seems probable that most of the charges were inspired either by the greed of potentates, or the prevalent suspicion of all that was not published in the full light of day. Some of the Knights confessed to part of the indictment and were admitted to penance, but this does not necessarily prove their guilt. The inquisitors of the northern province declared that many would not confess unless torture was used, and since this method of extracting confessions had never hitherto been used in England, they asked for direction in the matter, and whether torturers should be imported from the Continent?⁶ Other representations of a similar character were made to the King; the Pope himself intervened demanding the use of torture, and after

¹ *Foedera*, ii. 70, 92.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 90.

³ *Ibid.*, ii. 93, 94.

⁴ *Hemingburgh*, ii. 286-288, 291-292.

⁵ *Annales Lond.*, 180-198, Wilkin's *Concilia*, ii. 331-332.

⁶ *Hemingburgh*, 287, 291-292; *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 333-334.

considerable delay and evasion permission was granted for the use of this method of extorting confessions.¹ Even then some of the accused were acquitted by the provincial councils, but the Order in its corporate capacity was doomed, its houses suppressed, and its members scattered amongst the various monasteries with an allowance for their maintenance. Their employees were compensated, but the royal exchequer received the lion's share of their property, though when the Pope formally abolished the Order at the Council of Vienne in 1312, he bequeathed the whole of its property to the rival Knights of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem. In England the King forbade the Hospitallers to meddle with the goods of the Templars, and some of the forfeited estates seem to have been pledged to the Italian debtors of the King.² Finally, however, in 1313, the Knights of the Hospital received the royal sanction to take over the Templars' possessions, though the King protested to the Pope that he did so without prejudice to the rights of the Crown.³

True or false,⁴ the accusations brought against the Templars are but one manifestation of the depravity of the age, and other signs pointing in the same direction were not wanting. There was a grave ecclesiastical scandal when, in 1313, a new primate had to be chosen to succeed the aged Archbishop Winchelsey. The Canterbury monks elected Thomas Cobham, a man of learning and of upright character, but Edward, by liberal presents and urgent letters to Avignon, induced the Pope to annul the election and "provide" to the primacy the King's ex-tutor Walter Reynolds, Bishop of Worcester, a man of no learning and notorious reputation. Thus did the King deliberately encourage Papal interference, though he was constantly complaining of the demands that came from Avignon. One chronicler, using this event as his text, bitterly attacks Papal corruption and the sin of simony. "England alone of all

¹ See on this point "The Trial of the Knights Templars in England," by Clarence Perkins in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xxiv. 432-447, where much valuable material is given.

² *Foedera*, ii. 174, 214.

³ *Ibid.*, 235-237. For official documents containing the details of the trial of the Templars see Wilkin's *Concilia*, ii. 331-401. Much of the property never found its way to the Order of St. John in spite of Edward's sanction.

⁴ On the whole question of the position of the Templars in England and the reasons for the movement against them, see article by Prof. Perkins in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xxv. 209-230.

the lands of the earth feels the burden of the Pope's power, for he presumes much and neither prince nor people protest, receiving all fat revenues for himself and excommunicating those who resist. Papal legates spoil our land, others armed with Bulls sell our pre-bends."¹

Corruption reigned in high places, how did the poor fare? The lack of governance pressed hardly upon them, but worse even than this was the series of bad harvests. Heavy rains in 1315 produced extensive floods, and the seed sown in the fields either rotted or was washed away. Prices rose at once, and the poor could get no food at all. Corn sold in some districts at 40s the quarter, nowhere did it fetch less than 15s. or 20s. Other provisions rose in proportion, salt standing at 35s the quarter. Never before, cried the chroniclers, had such a state of affairs been known.² Though in the early autumn such crops as were harvested helped to check the dearth, prices rose again before Christmas, and famine reigned in the land throughout the next year. Even in 1317 the full effect of the crisis had not passed. The natural corollary to famine was disease; hundreds died of plague, and there were scarce enough to bury them. To add to the distress of an already distracted nation, large numbers of sheep and other live stock perished, and in 1319 a disastrous murrain carried off the large majority of the oxen, so that the lands could not be tilled.³ Some attempt to meet the crisis was made. In March, 1315, the King issued an ordinance at Parliament's request regulating the price of certain articles of food, but corn was not included, though a distinction was made in favour of corn-fed beef.⁴ It was soon found, however, that the edict did more harm than good, and in the following year it was repealed in Parliament, for it was better to buy in a dear market than not to buy at all, as one chronicler puts it.⁵ Another writer,⁶ surpassing his fellows in economic knowledge, declared that it was absurd to regulate prices by law, since it was not the law but the fertility of

¹ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 198.

² In the famine of 1294, however, the chroniclers had recorded the price of corn to be standing at 16s., sometimes even 20s. the quarter (Hemingburgh, II. 60 Cf. Cotton, 183, *Dunstable Annals*, 301)

³ Trokelowe, 92-93, *Flores Historiarum*, III. 174, 340-341; *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 214, *Annales Lond.*, 236, 239, *Vita Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 48.

⁴ Foedera, II. 263; *Annales Lond.*, 232-233, Trokelowe, 89-90

⁵ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 219.

⁶ *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 47-48.

the land which produced the corn, a doctrine which his contemporaries might have learnt with profit.

Such a period of dearth naturally complicated the political situation. Men were losing control of themselves, horrified chroniclers record that desperate fathers and mothers were even eating their own children,¹ and it was natural that the hard times should ultimately be brought home to the King and his friends. Hence the cry against the Court party was once more raised. Gaveston was dead, but others had taken his place, and minions like Hugh de Audley, William de Montacute, and Roger d'Amory dominated the King, and caused disorder and ill-feeling by their greediness. This Court party was considered the cause of all the evil and sorrow of the nation. Thanks to the disgrace of Bannockburn and to the active propaganda of Thomas of Lancaster, the King was unable to resist opposition, and at a Parliament at York in September, 1314, had to consent to remove his friend Archbishop Reynolds from the chancellorship, and to substitute John Sandall, a Lancastrian nominee. The chief complaint, however, was the extravagance of the King. In spite of the prevalent lack of food Edward had ordered large stocks of provisions to be purveyed for the royal household. Parliament compelled the King to reduce his expenses to £10 a day,² and later the opposition forced the issue of an edict against purveyance. The campaign against the King's friends was also carried one step farther by the exclusion of Hugh Despenser and Walter Langton, Bishop of Chester, from his council.³ So strictly conditional on the observation of the *Charteris* and the *Oidinances* was the grant of the Estates, that districts resisted the collectors on the ground that the conditions were not being fulfilled.⁴ Already it was understood that the control of the purse was the chief instrument in forcing the King to conform to the nation's will. Even then Lancaster was not satisfied. He assumed command of the troops and acquired fresh power as president of the King's Council.⁵ In January, 1316, the Parliament at Lincoln secured the republication of the *Oidinances*,⁶ which had taken the place held by the *Charteris* with the opposition in the previous reign, and in November the clergy were

¹ Trokelowe, 95.

² *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 209.

³ *Ibid.*, 208, 209. Despenser had already retired in fear of his unpopularity.

⁴ Parl. Writs, II. ii. 92.

⁵ Rot. Parl., i. 350, 352; *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 218.

⁶ Foedera, ii. 287.

rewarded for their support of Lancaster by the redress of certain grievances.¹ By this time, however, Lancaster was losing reputation · the lack of patriotism shown by this would-be patriot was becoming matter for comment. His refusal to serve in the Bannockburn campaign might have been passed over, but when it became known that the Lancastrian estates were spared by Bruce when he ravaged the North of England, men said that the Earl was encouraging Bruce for fear that the King would be too powerful if left unharassed by the Scottish invaders.² The party of the Ordainers was breaking up : open rupture between its two factions was precipitated early in 1317 by the action of Earl Warenne, who abducted the wife of Earl Thomas with the lady's consent. It was thought at the time that the King had a hand in the matter,³ certainly Lancaster held Edward responsible, and absolutely refused to attend the Council until those who had robbed him of his wife were driven from Court · War seemed inevitable. Lancaster mustered forces at Pontefract, the King appeared at York, but neither was willing to begin active hostilities. The opponents of Lancaster, however, saw their chance. They could discredit the Earl and usurp his policy of controlling the King, but they adopted more subtle methods than ever he had used. Roger d'Amory, married to one of the three Gloucester co-heiresses, was high in favour with the King. To him advances were made by the Earl of Pembroke and Bartholomew, Lord Badlesmere, who had been acting in concert against Lancaster for some time past.⁴ As a result a contract was drawn up, whereby Amory bound himself to induce the King to allow himself to be led and governed absolutely by these two magnates, who in return were to grant him their protection against all persons who should attack him. It was natural that Amory should thus join a third party, for his ambitions with regard to the Gloucester inheritance were likely to bring him into conflict with the younger Despenser, so he was ready to accept the protection of men who seemed more likely than Lancaster to control the King.⁵

¹ Statutes, i. 171-174, 175-176.

² *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 224-225.

³ *Flores Historiarum*, iii 178-179, *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 228.

⁴ See *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 49.

⁵ The interpretation of the alliance of Amory with the two magnates differs somewhat from the accepted idea which has, I think, failed to appreciate the im-

The Papal envoys sent to negotiate with Bruce were now straitly charged to restore unity to Edward's distracted kingdom.¹ Most of 1318 was spent in negotiation. A Parliament summoned for January was postponed till March, and again till June, lest the meeting of King and Earl should result in fighting. At Leicester, in March, Lancaster met representatives of the King and clergy, and took his stand on the Ordinances, agreeing to attest his allegiance, save only in the matter of his quarrel with Earl Warenne. At length, owing to the growing danger in the north,² the mediators were compelled to risk a personal meeting, so a full Parliament was called for June 19th at Lincoln.³ Even then, though furnished with a special safe-conduct, Lancaster refused to attend, since the King was escorted by an armed force of his enemies, amongst whom he named Warenne, the Despensers, and Amory. Finally at Leek on August 9th the two opponents met to be reconciled for the second time, to dine together, and to exchange the kiss of peace. This reconciliation was ratified in a Parliament at York in October. At the same time the Ordinances were reissued. Free pardons were granted on all sides, though the personal matter at issue between Warenne and Lancaster was excepted from the general pacification. However, even this dispute was settled before long,⁴ and once more hopes of better times began to be entertained. The Papal legates returned to Avignon gratified at the success of their efforts towards peace. The fall of Edward Bruce in Ireland and the cessation of the dearth were hailed as omens of better times in the future.

But the hollowness of the recent peace was revealed when the King called the nation to arms against the Scots. The siege of Berwick, as we have seen, was a dismal failure, and the cry of treason was raised. Men pointed at Lancaster, remembering how his estates had escaped Scottish ravages in the past. It was now said that his men skulked in their quarters during the siege, that he

portance of Amory's position as a member of the Court party. See Stubbs, ii. 342, and Tout, *Political History*, iii. 273

¹ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 227-228; *Papal Letters*, ii. 429-431. The Pope refused to absolve Edward from his oath to observe the Ordinance, and ordered the restoration of Lancaster's wife.

² Berwick fell in April into Bruce's hands.

³ Parl. Writs, II. 1. 181.

⁴ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 240.

himself had facilitated the Scottish inroads into England, and the price of his treachery was even quoted at the round sum of £40,000. In vain he offered to purge himself and disprove the charge of treason. Nor had the King's hostility abated, for at Berwick he had been heard to declare that he had not forgotten the sad fate of Gaveston, and Lancaster therefore refused to attend a meeting of magnates at York for fear of his master's anger.

Time had taught Edward no lessons, he never learnt the art of conciliation, and the baronage was becoming daily more alienated from him, owing to the favour shown to new favourites. Hugh Despenser and his son were now regarded as the inheritors of Gaveston's position. The elder Hugh had all along ranked as one of the most faithful of the King's friends. He alone of the magnates had stood by Gaveston to the end, he above all had been picked out as the Gascon's successor in the favour of the King, and Lancaster had insisted on excluding him from the benefits of the pacification of 1313.¹ But Despenser was a man of far different mould to the first favourite. The son of Simon de Montfort's justiciar who had fallen at Evesham, he had nevertheless been trusted by Edward I. Unlike most of the officials of that King he had also found favour with his son,² and had not lost his position on the accession of the new monarch. By birth a man of considerable if not great position, he had increased his importance by marrying the sister of the Earl of Warwick, and could not be reproached like Gaveston with being a foreigner and an upstart. But his ambition was great, for he aspired to rank with the chief men of the kingdom, and if guiltless of the gross rapacity of Gaveston, was obviously intent on supporting the King through thick and thin to better his own fortune. On the other hand, his son Hugh had opposed Gaveston, and was credited with the invention of the constitutional formula distinguishing between allegiance to the Crown and allegiance to the King's person, and declaring it permissible to use force to bring the sovereign to a sense of his responsibilities. In 1311 he had been so entirely identified with the Ordainers, that they had sustained him against

¹ *Vita Edwards Secundi*, 195.

² When Edward was exiled from Court by his father for his insolence to Bishop Langton, Despenser had kept up a correspondence with him and had sent him a present of raisins and wine (*Sussex Archaeological Collections*, II. 97).

the attacks of the King's household,¹ and in 1313, if we may believe the unsupported statement of one chronicler,² he had been made Chamberlain by the King's opponents to the intense indignation of Edward who bore him a great hatred. Personal ambition, however, led the younger Despenser to gravitate towards his father's politics. He had married the eldest of the co-heiresses to the Gloucester estates, and thus became the rival of Amory who had married another. It was natural that he should try to win the favour of the King, and thereby increase his chances of ousting the husbands of his two sisters-in-law from their shares in the De Clare inheritance. He therefore endeavoured to ingratiate himself with Edward, and to assist his father to bolster up the Court party, which without the ability of these two men might very well have collapsed.

Before long the younger Despenser had made himself all powerful among Edward's friends, and was using his influence with the King to strengthen his position. It was he that involved the King in a fresh quarrel with his magnates. Thanks to his marriage he was now Lord of Glamorgan, and his growing greed led him to covet the lands which had been apportioned to his brothers-in-law, Roger d'Amory and Hugh de Audley.³ He had even succeeded in driving the latter from Newport and adding it to his own inheritance. Not content with this, he cast longing eyes on the lordship of Gower, which belonged to William de Braose, who had no male heirs. This last had opened negotiations both with his own son-in-law John de Mowbray and with the Earl of Hereford for the sale of his estates, but Despenser placed all possible obstacles in the way of such a transfer, and induced the King to withhold his consent. On the death of De Braose in 1320 John de Mowbray assumed the inheritance in the right of his wife, according to the custom of the Welsh March. At once Despenser stepped in, declaring that this was an infringement of the royal prerogative, and appealing to the previous reign to show that the law of the land overruled the custom of the March, and that such alienation was invalid without the King's consent.⁴ This was the signal for an attack upon the favourite in which nearly the whole March

¹ *Annales Lond.*, 200.

² Baker, 6.

³ Lanercost, 241.

⁴ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 254-255, *Annales Paulini*, 292-293; *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 194.

joined. It was practically the beginning of civil war. The Earl of Hereford took the lead, and was joined by numerous lords with grievances to avenge—Mowbray over the Gower inheritance, Audley for the loss of Newport, Roger de Clifford because Despenser had disinherited his mother, Amory as a rival heir to the Gloucester inheritance, and the two Roger Mortimers, uncle and nephew, who complained of spoliation. Even the inhabitants of Glamorgan flocked in to the standard of the indignant magnates, to assist in the degradation of their lord. All the territories of the Despensers in Wales were overrun. Newport was restored to Audley, and other castles were taken and despoiled. The King did his best to support his favourite. He had at once¹ forbidden Hereford and his allies to meet in conference for unlawful purposes, and he had gone to Gloucester to be near the scene of action, having summoned a Council to advise him there as to the best methods of reducing the March to order. He deprived Amory of his Castle of St Briavel and confiscated Audley's territories. Hereford and Roger Mortimer of Wigmore were summoned to appear before him, and both Despenser and his opponents were ordered to desist from further hostilities.² Fulminations of this kind were, however, useless, since the magnates of England were determined to support this Marcher rising. Lancaster, who had been in touch with Hereford and his associates from the first, was resolved to turn the movement into an attack upon his old enemy, the father, as well as upon the son,³ and in May he called the northern lords to meet him at Pontefract, where a large assembly of barons and bannerets swore to help each other if attacked. Further, on June 28th, the prelates and clergy of the province of York met, at the bidding of Lancaster, at Sherburn in Elmet, whither came too the Earl of Hereford, but they deprecated war and looked for a settlement of grievances at the next Parliament, which must have annoyed Lancaster, who abhorred parliamentary procedure and always absented himself from Parliament if he could find an excuse.

January, 1321.

² *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 255-257; *Annales Paulini*, 293, *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 197, *Foedera*, ii. 442-445; *Parl. Writs*, II. i. 231, 232; II. ii. 155-156, 158-160. An excellent account of the causes which produced the rising against Despenser in Wales is given by Mr. W. H. Stevenson in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xii. 755-760.

³ *Trokkelowe*, 107; *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 257.

A Parliament, which did not include clerical representatives, had been summoned for July 15th in answer to Hereford's demand, though the King indignantly refused to dismiss the younger Despenser and hand him over to his enemies. Edward as usual temporised, and tried to put off the evil day. He fortified the Tower, which was in sad need of repair,¹ and besought the Londoners to keep the barons out of the City. The citizens, having just experienced a rigorous judicial inquisition, were not too well pleased with the royal party, but they gave the somewhat grudging reply that they were "unwilling to refuse" to keep the City for the King.² The barons were also anxious to have London on their side, and Hereford, who had collected a large body of his friends, including Roger Mortimer, Audley, and Amory, at St Albans, sent a letter to the Mayor and Aldermen asking for an interview. Presently he and his adherents moved to the suburbs of London, occupying Holborn, the Temple, and Clerkenwell, and cutting off the King, who was at Westminster, from his refuge in the Tower. The Mayor was forced to grant the interview which had been demanded, and Hereford secured a promise of neutrality from the City authorities by representing to them that the recent judicial inquiries were due to the machinations of the Despensers. This reduced Edward to complete impotence,³ and at last the Earl of Pembroke, assisted by the King's relative John of Brittany and the prelates, induced him to yield.⁴ The charges against the two Despensers and other members of the Court party were read out in Westminster Hall. The opening phrases recited word for word the formula in which in the case of Gaveston the King's responsibility to the baronage had been declared: both father and son had misled the King and alienated him from trustworthy advisers, had secured the appointment of corrupt judges, had oppressed Audley and Amory, and had polluted the fount of justice.⁵ For this they

¹ Rain had come down on the Queen during her recent confinement (*Liber Custumarum*, i. 409).

² *Memorials of London*, 142

³ *Annales Paulini*, 293-296.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 296-297; *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 258-259, *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 198. Even the Queen played a part in the melodrama, begging her lord on her knees before all the people to yield.

⁵ The charge of using the judges for his own end is justified in the case of the younger Despenser by a letter written by him to Sir John Inge, on the eve of the outbreak of the barons' wrath (printed in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xii. 760-761), which shows that this judge was one of Despenser's creatures.

were to be exiled in perpetuity from the following 29th August without possibility of recall save by the King with the consent of Parliament,¹ while all who had taken an active part against the favourites were pardoned. But, as the chronicler points out, such paper pardons were useless, for the magnates had put themselves in the wrong. Both Despensers were guilty, but that did not justify the seizure of their goods and the destruction of their manors. That only gave them a cause of complaint, and paved the way for their return and their ultimate triumph over their enemies.²

It must have been obvious that Edward had no intention of keeping his word. His position in reality was improved. The recent action of the barons was by no means popular, and the protest issued by the Despensers against their condemnation and their demand for a full and impartial inquiry were not without effect upon public opinion.³ Lancaster, nursing his grievances in the North, was committing secret treason by overtures to Robert Bruce, who bound himself to assist the Earls in arms in England, Wales, or Ireland whenever they should need it.⁴ The opposition was obviously conscious of weakness, one false step would turn the tables.

Within two months the King's opportunity came, and for once he did not let it slip. Early in October the Queen, who had a particular devotion to the shrine of St Thomas, applied for hospitality on her way to Canterbury at Lord Badlesmere's Castle of Leeds, near Maidstone, but was resolutely refused admittance by Lady Badlesmere in the absence of her husband, who was engaged in plundering the manors of the Despensers. Isabella was obliged to spend the night at the neighbouring priory of the Black Canons, and her imperious temper did not let the matter rest. Lady Badlesmere may have thought it dangerous to admit royal forces, as her lord was at that moment helping to plunder the Despensers, or she may have had some personal grudge against the unamiable Queen. At any rate her action, justified by Badlesmere in a letter to Isabella,

¹ Statutes, i. 181-184, Calendar of Close Rolls (1318-1323), 493.

² *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 260-261. ³ *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 70-71, 73.

⁴ At least so declared the indictment brought against Lancaster on his fall (Trokkelowe, 118-120; Foedera, ii. 478), though the treaty thus produced was declared by some to be a forgery (*Annales Paulini*, 302). The draft of the treaty was found among the papers of the Earl of Hereford after Boroughbridge.

stung the King into action. On October 16th he issued writs to the sheriffs, enlisted the Londoners by promises of particularly high pay,¹ and mustered a large force for the siege of Leeds Castle. Pembroke and the Archbishop of Canterbury made an attempt to bring about a reconciliation, but for once the King was determined to see the matter through. On October 31st the castle surrendered, some of the garrison were hanged, and Lady Badlesmere and her daughters lodged in the Tower. The magnates of the Welsh March gathered round Badlesmere at Kingston-upon-Thames, but they dispersed without taking any action, for Lancaster refused to move. Flushed with success, the King returned to London. The civil war so long arrested had begun.²

At once steps were taken to recall the Despensers. The Southern Convocation under the time-serving Archbishop Reynolds declared their condemnation illegal, and on January 9th, 1322, a safe-conduct was issued to the younger Hugh to facilitate his return.³ By this time the King had left London for the West,⁴ and though knights and esquires did not muster very willingly,⁵ a large proportion of the baronage, including his two brothers, Thomas Earl of Norfolk and Edmund Earl of Kent, his cousin John of Brittany, Earl of Richmond, Pembroke, the half-hearted royalist, Arundel and Warenne, two recent opponents, and many others, joined his standard. Christmas was spent at Cirencester, but without delay the royal forces advanced against the Marcher lords. At Worcester the King was prevented from crossing the Severn, at Bridgnorth the Mortimers checked the enemy's advance guard.⁶ But the royal army was strong, and Lancaster still remained inactive, so the Mortimers decided to yield. They were promptly despatched to the Tower, whilst Audley and Maurice de Berkely were incarcerated at Wallingford.⁷ From Shrewsbury Edward marched to Hereford, where the

¹ Cross-bowmen were to receive 8d., archers 6d., men-at-arms 2d., knights 2s., and esquires 12s a day (*Annales Paulini*, 299).

² Troke lowe, 110-111, *Annales Paulini*, 298-299; Baker, 11-12; *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 262, Murimuth, 35, *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 199-200.

³ Parl. Writs, II. ii. 172-173, *Foedera*, ii. 471; Murimuth, 35; Baker, 12, *Annales Paulini*, 301.

⁴ Parl. Writs, II. i. 540-543, *Foedera*, ii. 462.

⁵ Parl. Writs, II. i. 543.

⁶ In the struggle the town was set on fire.

⁷ One chronicler declared that the King had promised pardon and then clapped them into prison (*Flores Historiarum*, iii. 201). Certainly safe-conducts had been

Bishop was punished for countenancing the rebels. All resistance in the West had collapsed. Those who had not surrendered had fled to the North, where Lancaster had been organising his forces ever since he had realised that the King's actions were to be taken seriously. Edward decided at once to follow the fugitives, and called out more men, adding a touch of defiance by ordering the two Despensers to bring up detachments.¹ At the same time Lancaster was warned that to harbour fugitives from the West would be high treason.² But it was not only against the insurgents that the King called out his men. It was to resist a Scottish inroad that some of the troops were needed. Sir Andrew Harcla, the governor of Carlisle, made a special journey South to beg the King to postpone the punishment of the rebels and advance to the succour of the defenceless Border, but in vain, for the King would do nothing till traitors had been subdued.³ Meanwhile, Lancaster had begun to act on the offensive. Realising too late that he had weakened his position by leaving Badlesmere and the Mortimers unsupported, he moved with Hereford, Amory, Clifford, Mowbray, and many others from Pontefract, where he had so long lain idle, and laid siege to the royal Castle of Tickhill. Advancing from thence to meet the royal forces, the rebels for some days held the bridge across the Tient at Burton against all attacks. In the end the King found a ford higher up and crossed unperceived with the main body of his army. Lancaster and his friends with one accord turned and fled. Demoralisation set in, men began to desert. But the King pursued his enemy, taking Tutbury on his way, and capturing Amory, who was so severely wounded that he died in three days.⁴ The one hope of the fugitives was to effect a junction with the Scots, but at Boroughbridge on the Ure Lancaster found both the bridge and a neighbouring ford held in force by Harcla, who had dismounted all his Westmorland and Cumberland levies at the ford, Scottish fashion in "schiltron" formation, and with both divisions had placed archers, with orders to shoot speedily and steadily so soon

issued to the Mortimers and Hereford (*Parl. Writs*, II. ii. 167. Cf. Murimuth, 35-36)

¹ *Parl. Writs*, II. i. 546, etc., II. ii. 177.

² *Ibid.*, II. ii. 176.

³ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 265-266.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 266-268, *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 74-75, Baker, 13, Murimuth, 36; *Parl. Writs*, II. i. 557.

as the enemy charged. To meet these tactics and force the passage of the river the Earls divided their forces. Hereford and Clifford, imitating their opponents, dismounted their men and advanced to the bridge, but Hereford was soon slain while fighting on the bridge by a Welsh soldier who struck at him from below, and his followers had to retire. Lancaster fared no better, for his cavalry could not force the passage of the ford owing to the volleys of the archers. By evening both parties still held their original positions, but in the morning Lancaster, bereft of the support of Hereford, and seeing his men deserting in large numbers, with Mowbray and Clifford surrendered to Hailea.¹

By March 16th, the day of Boroughbridge, Edward had reached Lancaster's Castle of Pontefract, which had been left totally undefended. Thither the prisoners were sent to have summary justice meted out to them. Lancaster was given a mock trial, in which he was not allowed to defend himself. The worst details of a traitor's death were remitted in consideration of his royal blood,² but he was led out to execution with every sign of contumely, riding a sorry nag, jeered at and pelted with snow by the populace before his head was hacked from his body.³ Many other rebels suffered the extreme penalty. Some died at Pontefract, others at Bristol, Gloucester, Cardiff, Winchelsea, and Windsor. John de Mowbray and Roger de Clifford were executed at York, Badlesmere at Canterbury. Savagely was the blood of Gaveston avenged. Little sympathy can be extended to the victims. Hereford, if stupid and self-important, was worthy of some consideration, but his fellows were not of the same stamp. Some like Amory, having been raised to affluence by the King's favour, had turned against their master, others like Badlesmere had intrigued with both parties and changed sides as suited their convenience. Least of all did Lancaster deserve pity. But as Edward's unpopularity grew, so did Lancaster's memory rise in popular estimation. His evil

¹ Lanercost, 243-244; Baker, 14; *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 204-205; Brut, 219 xix. 711-713.

² Apparently, too, at the prayer of the Queen.

³ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 270-271, *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 205-207; *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 77; Baker, 14, *Annales Paulini*, 302-303. A most graphic account of the capture and death of the Earl is given in Brut, 219-224. The official indictment is to be found in Foedera, ii. 478, and Trokelowe, 112-124.

deeds were forgotten, his opposition to the King told in his favour. Miracles were performed at the place of his execution,¹ some held him a martyr, and chroniclers lovingly alluded to him as the "gentile erle".² But those who wrote later speak of Thomas as a man who neglected his wife for a host of concubines and drove her into acts of infidelity, who posed as protector of the poor and really cared for nothing but his own ends, who set up a party in opposition to the King and then could not control it nor bring good government to the kingdom.³ It would be too much to expect to find a single-minded patriot in a man as typical of a degenerate age as was Thomas of Lancaster, but the preacher of constitutional doctrine must himself be governed by constitutional principles. Selfish to an unparalleled degree, he always thought of his own advantage alone. He failed his friends, was unfaithful to the cause he championed, and finally received the reward of his actions.

The Despensers were once more in power, and the elder was soon after made Earl of Winchester, though prudence prevented the promotion of the younger Hugh to the Gloucester Earldom which he coveted. Neither was as black as he was painted.⁴ They had come into conflict with a party which coveted their influence, and pursued them with such envenomed hatred as to make their fall almost inevitable. Had they started with a clean slate in 1322, they might have ended their days in honour, for the policy of the King under their influence showed greater restraint and more constitutional practice than that of Lancaster. One of the first royal acts after Boroughbridge was to summon to York a Parliament, the constitution of which showed a greater appreciation than had hitherto been manifest of Edward I.'s doctrine, that what touches all should be approved of all. The Ordinances were revoked, but with the suggestion that they were illegal, not merely as infringing on the royal prerogative, but because they had been forced upon the King by a party of barons, and had not originated in, though they had been confirmed by, a full Parliament; and the right of Parliament, prelates, earls, barons, and commonalty to

¹ Higden, viii. 314; *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 206-207.

² Brut, 224.

³ For the two points of view compare *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 206-207, and Higden, viii. 314. Cf also *Osney Annals*, 346.

⁴ The younger Hugh was accused of piracy during his exile (*Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 261, *Annales Paulini*, 300).

control public affairs was recognised in express terms.¹ Moreover, the King of his own initiative issued ordinances for enforcing much of his father's legislation, which would effect what the Ordainers had professed to desire. Thus the fall of the Ordainers seemed to have done more for constitutional progress than their rise, and some credit for this must be given to the Despensers.²

Unfortunately the energy displayed in subduing Lancaster and Hereford was not sufficient to chastise Bruce too. Men and money were procured from the York Parliament for a Scottish campaign, Ireland was asked to send a contingent, and Harcla, created Earl of Carlisle for his services, was placed in command of the Scottish marches. In anticipation of a long campaign the Exchequer was removed to York, and on August 1st the army set out northwards, but it could do nothing against Scottish strategy. By September Edward was writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury that he had found neither man nor beast in the Lothians, and was compelled to retreat; he took up winter quarters at Byland Abbey in Yorkshire, meditating another invasion in the spring. But in October Bruce having crossed the Border, fell upon the King's forces who were commanded by the Earl of Richmond, and after a hard fight drove the English soldiers like chaff before him, and even chased Edward himself right up to the gates of York.³ The whole north country was at the mercy of the Scots, who lay at Malton till October 22nd, and the state of affairs was desperate. The Canons of Bridlington, in whose town Edward had tarried for a moment on his flight, removed their treasure across the Humber to Goole, and even risked negotiations with an excommunicated enemy.⁴ Small wonder if some began to think it were better to come to terms with the Scots on their own account than to wait

¹ Statutes, i. 189.

² It was probably due to the Despensers that an attempt was made in the following June to reform the management of the King's wardrobe, and provide for a better keeping of the accounts (see document dated June, 6 Edward II., printed in *Life Records of Chaucer* (Chaucer Society, 1875-86), ii. 58-62. The Household Ordinances which immediately precede this document are here wrongly ascribed to the same date, since Bartholomew Badlesmere, who was executed in 1322, is mentioned as steward of the Household.)

³ Scalacronica, 149-150; Barbour's *Bruce*, ii. 128-134, *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 210; Trokelowe, 125-126; *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 79, Lanercost, 247-248; Melsa, ii. 346.

⁴ They took care to get a special dispensation from the Archbishop of York.

for the King, either to vindicate the honour of English arms or make a definite peace. No man had done more for the preservation of the North from Bruce's inroads than the new Earl of Carlisle. It had been he who had come to the support of Edward in the hour of his need and had prevented the rebellious barons from joining forces with the enemies of their country. But even Harcla, with all his loyalty and gratitude, could not stand by and see the districts he had so manfully defended being harried and destroyed. No course seemed to be open save to come independently to terms with the Scots. It was probably the desperate expedient of a desperate man rather than hatred and jealousy of Despenser, that urged Harcla to open up negotiations with the enemy on the basis of a permanent peace and the acknowledgment of Robert as true King of Scotland. All who agreed to the terms, whether the English King gave his consent or no, were to be treated as friends by the Scottish King. The action was obviously illegal.¹ Harcla had virtually renounced his allegiance and become a traitor by acknowledging Bruce to be King of Scotland while his own sovereign still claimed that title, and in February, 1323, he suffered a traitor's death. But in spirit he was no traitor. He had made no alliance with Bruce against Edward, but had merely shown the way towards peace. No greater condemnation of royal inefficiency can be found in any part of the reign than that it drove a loyal servant to technical treason.²

Too many of his northern subjects had supported Harcla's action to allow Edward to ignore the suggestion that he should come to some agreement with the Scots. Negotiations were therefore opened. Representatives of both parties met at Newcastle, and, on March 14th, 1323, a truce was announced on the part of the

¹ In February, 1322, Harcla had been given powers to treat with the Scots for a peace or truce (*Foedera*, II. 473). This, however, may now have lapsed, and in any case it would not have allowed the acknowledgment of Bruce as King of Scotland.

² Lanercost, 248-251, which takes the view that it was merely a technical treachery. This is not the attitude of the chroniclers as a whole, who denounce Harcla as a traitor pure and simple (*Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 81-84; *Troke-lowe*, 127; *Flores Historiarum*, III. 211-212). Harcla's official condemnation is given in *Parl. Writs*, II. II. 262, *Foedera*, II. 509. His arrest was ordered on February 1st, 1323 (*Foedera*, II. 504). His powers and offices were taken from him on February 12th (*ibid.*, 507). For the whole career of Andrew de Harcla, or Andrew of Hartley as he is more properly called, see article by J. E. Morris in *Cumberland and Westmorland Arch. Soc. Transactions*, new series, III. 307.

English King.¹ Fresh deliberations at the Archbishop of York's Palace at Bishopthorpe, where the King was staying, led to a definite truce for thirteen years signed on May 30th.² Bruce in it seems to have waived his claim to be formally addressed as King of Scotland. Some hoped for a final peace, and Bruce made an effort in the following year to secure such a settlement, declaring himself willing to sheathe his sword and live at peace with his neighbours till they but acknowledge officially that he was King of Scotland. Edward's obstinate weakness would probably have refused this concession, but the demands laid before him went far beyond the sovereignty of Scotland or the return of the Scottish regalia and coronation stone, for they claimed the cession of English lands as far south as Yorkshire. To such demands the English not unnaturally gave an absolute refusal, and negotiations broke down, though the truce already arranged was allowed to stand.³ Yet, though England would not allow it, the war of Scottish independence was over. Edward I.'s attempt to incorporate Scotland could be definitely pronounced a failure. Much good blood had been spilt, more bad blood had been created, and though Bruce could not live much longer to trouble the English, Scottish invasion was to continue to be a standing danger to England whenever she was preoccupied with other matters.

But if Edward was a failure in Scotland, his government in England was still more disastrous. The energy he had shown in the destruction of Lancaster soon evaporated, and he settled down to his usual state of supine negligence. The King's financial tyranny was the subject of much complaint in the Parliament of Westminster in February, 1323. A request for money to ransom the Earl of Richmond, a prisoner in Scotland, was refused on the ground that the country could not be expected to ransom all the royal relatives. All kinds of charges of cruelty and despotism were brought against the Sovereign by the hostile chroniclers. He could do no right, and though the attacks on him are obviously exaggerated, there is ample evidence to prove that he was rapidly losing the sympathy and earning the contempt of all his subjects. Even his own chosen

¹ *Foedera*, II. 510.

² *Ibid.*, 521-522; *Blaneforde*, 133-138; *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 84, *Flores Historiarum*, III. 215-216.

³ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 275-278. Cf. *Flores Historiarum*, III. 224.

officials did not fulfil their duty. At Wallingford the carelessness of the custodian of two royal prisoners allowed some of the survivors of the Lancastrian party to seize the castle, and set Maurice Berkeley and Hugh Audley free, though a force under the Earls of Winchester and Kent managed to reduce the rebels to order.¹ Worse than this, the young Roger Mortimer, a far more important prisoner, succeeded in escaping from the Tower with the assistance of two London citizens. In vain the King issued stringent orders for the arrest of the escaped Marcher. Mortimer had crossed the Thames and made his way safely to Fiance.

This escape of Mortimer was the beginning of the King's downfall. The Londoners were furious at royal interference with their liberties and the totally pointless depositions and appointments of Mayors by the King,² and showed their hostility by the cult of Lancaster's memory. Hundreds of pilgrims came and offered candles before the tablet which had been placed in St Paul's commemorating the granting of the Ordinances and the deeds of the late Earl, and when the tablet was removed by order of the King, the pillar on which it had hung was regarded as sacred to the memory of one who had opposed royal mismanagement.³ About this time reports began to circulate that the Earl's tomb at Pontefract was working wondrous miracles, and to such a pitch did the belief in his sanctity rise, that special services were composed as for one who had died a martyr for his country.⁴ However undeserved, this popular canonisation shows the trend of affairs⁵

The King was getting desperate, indeed his arbitrary acts were largely dictated by despair. The more he trusted the Despensers, the more did they become the only people whom he could trust. The worthless Archbishop of Canterbury, who owed his promotion entirely to his royal pupil's favour, was shaken in his fidelity by the permission given to the Archbishop of York to have his cross

¹ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 273-275; Blaneforde, 138-139.

² Foedera, II. 539, *Annales Paulini*, 305, *French Chronicle of London*, 47.

³ Foedera, II. 525; *French Chronicle of London*, 46. The inscription on the tablet is given in *Lond. Chron.*, notes.

⁴ See the Office of Thomas of Lancaster in *Political Songs* (Camden Society), 268-272.

⁵ It did not stop at Lancaster, for the rebels' tombs at Bristol developed miraculous healing powers, and the King had to issue commissions to inquire into the matter (Foedera, II. 536, 537, 547).

carried before him in the southern province when coming to Parliament, and later by the appointment of this same rival to be Treasurer, in succession to the Bishop of Exeter. But the most astounding evidence of the absolute helplessness of Edward in his kingdom was his inability to obtain a bishopric for his friend and chancellor, Robert Baldock. He designed him for Winchester, but the intriguing John Stratford, who was on an embassy to the Papal seat at Avignon, secured it for himself. Edward might fume and refuse to acknowledge the appointment for a year, but in the end he had to yield. Next he designed Baldock for Norwich, but again his wishes were defied by William Aye'min, who obtained the prize from the Pope.¹ Other bishops came in for the King's displeasure, but of all he most distrusted Adam Orlton, Bishop of Hereford, the friend of the Mortimers. Yet when this prelate was accused of treason, the bishops and clergy in a body took him under their protection, and the King had to be satisfied with the seizure of his temporalities, and an appeal to the Pope to deprive him of his see. Of all men Orlton was the most dangerous to provoke. Absolutely unscrupulous, a rebel of some standing, gifted with a particularly keen understanding of worldly affairs, he set himself to stir up trouble in the kingdom. The material was ready to hand; it was Orlton who provided the spark by concentrating attention once more on the Despensers.² The hostility shown towards these two favourites had died down of late, or at least had been concealed after the triumph of the King in 1322, but in 1325 it was rekindled. They cannot have been entirely blameless for the inefficient government of their master, though it would not be just to hold them responsible for all the disasters which resulted from the King's weakness. Still they were favourites, and as favourites it was easy to raise the storm against them. They were accused of using their influence with the King to obtain lands and money for themselves, and of encouraging him in the oppression of the weak and in that parsimony in state affairs which was so conspicuous.³ Some looked on both as equally to blame for the evils of the kingdom, others spoke of the elder Hugh as an upright honest man brought to ruin by the machinations of his son.⁴ Both, however, were held

¹ 1325. *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 284-285; *Annales Paulini*, 309.

² Baker, 16.

³ *Ibid.*, 16-17, *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 280.

⁴ *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 87, *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 260-261, Baker, 6-7.

responsible for the King's announcement in 1324 that the county of Cornwall, and all the castles, lands, and other possessions of the Queen, were taken into his hands owing to his apprehension of an invasion from France¹. It was well known that Edward had never been deeply attached to his wife, and that she had long complained of his neglect; it was now suggested that the Despensers were in negotiation with the Pope to procure a divorce, and that they therefore thought it advisable to secure her dower. The seizure of her possessions left Isabella at the mercy of her husband, who reduced her following, removed her servants, put her upon an allowance of twenty shillings a day, and worst of all, placed the younger Hugh's wife as a sort of gaoler to control her actions and even examine her correspondence. The Queen naturally was furious. In her distress she was seized on by the Bishops of Hereford and Lincoln, who saw their opportunity for striking a blow at the sovereign they hated and despised. With much unassumed sorrow for their own plight, and manufactured sympathy for her troubles, they so worked upon the Queen's feelings that she was ready to dare anything for revenge.²

The opportunity was at hand. Across the channel the House of Capet, which was trying to build up a strong centralised monarchy such as had been the ambition of Henry II or Edward I. in England, could not look with equanimity on the Duchy of Aquitaine, cutting off from its influence, as it did, one of the fairest and most prosperous districts of France. Edward I had come near to losing his hold on this duchy; his son for a time escaped the danger owing to the rapid succession of three sovereigns to the French throne, all sons of Edward I.'s old enemy Philip the Fair, and all consequently brothers of Edward II.'s queen. Still there was a steady French pressure on Aquitaine, and more than once Edward had made futile protests at the invasion of his rights, even vainly invoking the intervention of the Pope. As was usual, the question of homage played a large part in the diplomatic struggle between the two Kings. The French officials, however, still continued to press their master's claims in Aquitaine; commercial difficulties again complicated matters, and when Charles IV succeeded his brother on the throne, the demand for homage was

¹ *Foedera*, n. 569.

² *Baker*, 18.

renewed with irritating persistency. Parliament advised procrastination,¹ but complications arose which enlarged the question of homage into one of the exact relations between vassal and lord. While the Earl of Kent, the Archbishop of Dublin, and other envoys were at Paris trying to postpone the demand for homage, certain townsmen of Saint-Sardos in the Agenais, resenting the erection of a fortification in their midst, rose in rebellion, and refused to acknowledge the authority of the Duke of Aquitaine. The rebellion, obviously prompted by the French officials, being put down with considerable severity by the Seneschal of Aquitaine, Charles IV at once improved the opportunity. The Seneschal was summoned before the Parlement de Paris, and on his refusal was declared contumacious, and was attacked by an armed force at Montpezat.² The point raised by this event was the right of appeal from the action of the Seneschal in Aquitaine to the overlord in Paris, and Edward appointed commissioners to settle the matter.³ A settlement was of course not the French King's desire, and his kinsman Charles of Valois in the summer of 1324 overran the Agenais in spite of the Earl of Kent, now Lieutenant of the King in Gascony. Edward and his advisers were totally incapable of meeting such a contingency. The official records teem with orders, which were either disobeyed or instantly countermanded. Men were called out for an expedition to Gascony, distress of knighthood was resorted to for the raising of funds, the coasts were to be protected, a fleet from the Cinque Ports was summoned to Sandwich, and did actually collect at Plymouth, letters were written to the Pope detailing the iniquities of the King of France, allies were sought in Spain, marriage alliances were offered to the Kings of Aragon and Castille, and the Earl of Pembroke was despatched to seek an amicable settlement. But all these measures failed. The fleet assembled, but proved so mutinous that it had to be disbanded: the Pope only advised Edward to make peace and do homage—the marriage alliances hung fire, and as a final blow, that

¹ Blaneforde, 140.

² *Ibid.*, 143-145; *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 220-221; *Foedera*, ii. 547, 550, 554.

³ Blaneforde, 145, *Flores Historiarum*, iii. 222. Nangis Continuatio, ii. 55, gives a rather different story. M Bréquigny in "Mémoire sur les différends entre la France et l'Angleterre" in *Collection des Traitéz particuliers relatifs à l'Histoire de France* (Paris, 1830), xviii. 372-375, tells yet another on the strength of a Chancery Roll.

mature peacemaker the Earl of Pembroke died almost as soon as he had reached France

The King and his advisers were at their wit's end. Peace must be made, and at the suggestion of Stratford, Bishop of Winchester, the Queen was sent over to Paris to negotiate a settlement. Isabella probably originated the idea herself, for Stratford was assisting Orlton to excite her against the Despensers, and it may have occurred to her that from France, safe under the protection of her brother's Court, she could dictate terms to her husband with regard to his hated favourites. The Despensers unwisely accepted the proposal, and early in March, 1325, the Queen crossed the Channel. The truce between the two countries was prolonged to facilitate negotiations. By June 13th a provisional agreement was attained as to an interchange of lands in Guienne and Gascony, but on the question of homage Charles was obdurate, and only agreed to extend the time within which it must be rendered.¹ Parliament decided unanimously that it would be wise for Edward to go to Paris and do homage in person. The Despensers protested that it was folly for the King to put himself in his enemies' hands, especially as there was danger at home, for Henry of Lancaster, the younger brother of Thomas, had lately been found in correspondence with the traitor Orlton, and even if the correspondence was quite innocent, the Earl of Leicester, as he was allowed to style himself, had assumed the arms of Earl Thomas, and had quite recently raised a cross to his memory in the confines of Leicester.² But meanwhile the Queen, by no means anxious to see her husband, obtained an offer from the King of France which rendered Edward's visit quite unnecessary. The homage due from Edward would be waived by Charles, if the heir of England were invested by his father with Aquitaine and Ponthieu, and sent over to perform it in person, an offer which, simple as it seemed at first sight, really concealed a deep design on Isabella's part to secure the person of the youthful Edward Prince of Wales. Traitors in the Queen's confidence, like the Bishop of Lincoln, joined with the terrified Despensers in urging the acceptance of this proposal on the willing King, though some of the wiser and more honest magnates disapproved of such a course. On September 2nd, Edward transferred the County of Ponthieu to his

¹ *Foedera*, II. 601-602.

² *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 280-283.

son, and similarly the Duchy of Aquitaine eight days later. On September 12th young Edward sailed from Dover.¹

The Queen was now committed to her line of action. In Paris she had met the fugitive Marcher, Roger Mortimer, with whom she had compromised herself—she was a woman of unbridled passions, and had been ill-treated by her husband. Together they planned their revenge on the Despensers—whom they both hated: already perhaps they made the deposition, possibly the death, of Edward their ultimate goal. Round them gathered the exiles and the proscribed who had fled the country in 1322. The scandalous intimacy of Mortimer and Isabella had probably begun before the younger Edward had left England; in any case news of it was soon brought back by Walter Stapeldon, Bishop of Exeter, who fled from Paris in disguise to warn his master.² The King at once ordered his wife and son to return, but he was met by a refusal until Hugh Despenser should be removed. With all haste he laid the matter before a Parliament summoned to Westminster for November 18th, where he declared himself unable to understand Isabella's hatred of his beloved Hugh, and hinted at the true reason for her attitude. The bishops agreed to admonish her, and the King himself sent a letter bidding her to return at once, and warning her against the company of traitors. Isabella showed no sign of obeying her husband's commands, but her growing disrepute made it impossible for her to remain longer in Paris. With her son and paramour she went to Hainault, where she secured the alliance of Count William by the betrothal of the newly created Duke of Aquitaine to his daughter Philippa, without reference to the magnates of England, as one chronicler points out, and in direct opposition to the English King's wishes.³ Troops obtained in Hainault, as part payment of Philippa's marriage portion, were placed under the command of the Count's brother John,⁴ and all was now ready for an invasion of England. Meanwhile, Edward was doing his utmost to stave off impending disaster. Orders were issued for the protection of the coast, the mustering of a fleet, and the establishment of beacons for signalling the approach of an invader. A strict search was instituted in all the ships coming to England for letters sent over by the Queen's partisans. Special regulations

¹ *Foedera*, ii. 605, 607, 609.

² *Foedera*, ii. 617, 618, 623.

³ *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 285-286, Baker, 20.

⁴ Baker, 20-21; Murimuth, 46, Avesbury, 281.

were issued for the preservation of order in London, the Despensers charging themselves particularly with the fortification of the Tower.¹ But all such precautions and preparations were of no avail. The reward of many years of misrule was to be reaped. Desections from the King's party were of daily occurrence. Edward's brother the Earl of Kent made his way from Gascony to join the Queen, even John of Brittany, Earl of Richmond, who had supported his cousin through many crises, had to be declared a traitor; many others were imprisoned for hostility to the Despensers, and the sailors of the fleet, refusing to obstruct the passage of the invaders, sailed off to plunder their old foes on the coast of Normandy.² However energetic they might be, the Despensers were powerless. England, impatient of the inefficiency of its incapable King, waxed sentimental over the wrongs, real or imagined, of a dissolute woman.³

On September 24th, 1326, the blow fell. Isabella landed at Orwell, near Harwich,⁴ with her "gentle Mortimer," the Earl of Kent, and John of Hainault at the head of his mercenaries. The invading forces made their first halt at Walton on the property of Earl Marshal, who soon rode into the camp, followed by the Earl of Leicester, the Bishops of Hereford, Lincoln, and Ely, the Archbishop of Dublin, and large numbers of men of all conditions from the surrounding country, who swelled the army to quite goodly proportions. Undoubtedly among Isabella's followers were men who hated the Despensers and would join any standard against them, but there was a far larger proportion of those who were induced to draw the sword in vengeance for a woman's wrongs. Herein lay the secret of the movement's immediate success. Isabella, whose infidelity was not yet generally credited, had that attractive power peculiar to unprincipled women; she knew the value of striking a note which has always appealed to the heart of the sentimental Englishman—that of misunderstood womanhood. Faithful to her pose, she set out for Bury St. Edmunds in the meek posture of a pilgrim. It was

¹ Foedera, II. 631; French Chronicle of London, 49

² Ibid., 49, 51.

³ Isabella posed as an injured innocent, and actually had the audacity to wear widow's weeds with great ostentation (French Chronicle of London, 49)

Foedera, II. 643. The date of landing is variously given by the chroniclers, Baker, 21, Murimuth, 46; and Avesbury, 282, give September 26th; Annales Paulini, 313, French Chronicle of London, 51; and Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon, 87, give September 24th

announced that the movement was aimed solely at the Despensers. Meanwhile, Isabella and Mortimer had sent to the Londoners, asking for their assistance in destroying "the enemies of the land," but the citizens prudently returned no answer, as the King and the Despensers commanded the City from the Tower. A second letter met with better success. In spite of the opposition of the Mayor, Chigwell, a nominee of the King, this document was secretly posted at dawn of day on the cross in Cheap, erected to the memory of good Queen Eleanor, and copies soon appeared in the windows of houses all over the City. The decision of the Londoners was not long in doubt when the King fled westwards and could no longer overawe them by his presence. On October 15th the hounds of disorder were let loose. An unfortunate man suspected of being a Despenser spy was the first victim, and then the Mayor was seized by the mob, dragged off to the Guild Hall, "crying mercy with clasped hands," and compelled to accede to the wishes of the people. But the chief object of the mob's wrath was the Bishop of Exeter, as one of the Queen's principal enemies. His house in the Outer Temple was sacked, and by sad mischance he himself met the rioters as he was riding into London, was seized on the very steps of St Paul's, dragged into Cheap and decapitated. His head was sent as a tribute of loyalty to the Queen, but his body was left naked in the street,¹ and not for some months did it receive decent interment in his own cathedral city. Thus died a man who, whatever his faults, rose superior to the men of this unhappy age at least in his zeal for learning, to which his foundation of Exeter College in the University of Oxford stands as a perpetual memorial. Meanwhile, the property of the Earl of Arundel in the Priory of the Holy Trinity, Aldgate, was seized, Chancellor Baldock's house was sacked, the Bardei merchants, custodians of the Despenser wealth, lost their all, and the Tower was captured.² While London was celebrating the triumph of Isabella's party, Edward was fleeing westwards, accompanied by his few faithful followers, the Earl of Arundel, the Despensers, and

¹ The vengeful mob refused to allow the Canons of St. Paul's to harbour the corpse, but it found temporary burial, thanks to the charity of two poor women.

² French Chronicle of London, 51-56, Meles, II. 351-352, *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 86, *Annales Paulini*, 315-317, Baker, 23-24. Two of Stapeldon's murderers were afterwards convicted but were let off with a penance (*Annales Paulini*, 345-346, 350). The two citizens who had helped Mortimer to escape were made joint wardens of the Tower.

Baldock Nearly every one else had forsaken him. The Archbishop of Canterbury having published a Bull against the enemies of the kingdom, intended originally for the Scots, fled to his home in Kent to watch the course of events. It was now only a question whether the King would escape capture. The Queen was pursuing her husband into the West, but before proceeding to Gloucester with an army increased in number by contingents from the northern counties, found time to listen to a sermon preached at Oxford before the University by the Bishop of Hereford, in which for the first time the intention of deposing the King was clearly indicated. Edward had left London on October 2nd, and by way of Gloucester, Westbury, and Tintern reached Chepstow a fortnight later. Together with the younger Despenser and Baldock he tried to find safety in Lundy Island, but contrary winds drove him back to the coast of Wales. He was at Cardiff on the 27th, and after many wanderings took final refuge in the Abbey of Neath. Before this had happened the elder Despenser had been compelled to surrender at Bristol to the Queen, who at once had him tried and executed. The capture of the King was not long delayed. On November 15th he and his two companions were betrayed by their Welsh friends, and Isabella was complete mistress of the situation. Edward was imprisoned at Kenilworth under the care of Henry of Leicester, who had already begun to style himself Earl of Lancaster. The younger Despenser was executed at Hereford a few days later, but not before the Earl of Arundel had fallen into the enemy's hands at Shrewsbury, and had suffered the same fate. In all cases the most inhuman indignities were heaped upon the victims, and though Baldock's orders saved him from instant execution, he was done to death by the London mob a short time afterwards¹.

Thus did Edward fall into the power of his adulterous Queen, with hardly a voice raised in his behalf, and only in Wales, the place of his birth, was there any sign of loyalty, though nevertheless it was by the Welsh that he was betrayed. Those few whose entire dependence upon him had compelled fidelity being now dead, the way to deposition was clear. Before Edward's capture his son had been proclaimed guardian of the realm, but now a regent could not act for a King who had been brought back to the seat of govern-

¹ *Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon*, 87-89, Baker, 25-26; *Murimuth*, 49-50, *Melsa*, ii. 353; *Annales Paulini*, 319-321.

ment, so legal form had to be given to the revolution that had taken place. Writs had been issued for a Parliament, which met on January 7th, 1327. The magnates bound themselves by oath to support the Queen and her son in their "quarrel" against the Despensers and their associates, and thus paved the way for an address by the arch-conspirator Orlton, in which he said the question to be decided was whether the present King or his son should rule the kingdom. The decision was not long in doubt, since the Londoners, still so turbulent that the law courts were suspended and none could say the mob nay, shouted down any possible opposition to the substitution of the son for the father. Four bishops and a few others managed to make their protests heard. The faithful Archbishop of York, who though much mixed up with the Court, had managed to keep a reputation for unsullied honour, the Bishops of London, Carlisle, and Rochester stood almost alone in their refusal to acclaim the new King in Westminster Hall.¹ A justification of the action thus taken was issued, in which the misdeeds of Edward II. were summarised. Taken as a whole this document, if vague in its charges, was fairly accurate, emphasising as it did the failure of the King's foreign policy, his neglect of the advice of the wise men of the kingdom for that of evil ministers, his oppression of the Church and violation of his coronation oath by not enforcing justice, his waste of time in unseemly occupations and total neglect of the business of the kingdom.² In this last charge the secret of Edward's failure is to be found. He was more unbusinesslike than vicious, "Prudent, pleasant of speech, but maladroit in action," was the estimate of one who knew him well, and who understood the true cause of his fall.³ Laziness and inability to control the increasing complications of government, foolishness in his selection of agents to perform his will, an impatient weakness which prevented concentration on any definite object were the qualities which ruined this unhappy King. Edward I.'s reign had raised government to a fine art, which required constant attention and care. It now needed a man ready to apply himself closely to affairs of state to fill the position of English King, unless he was possessed of that touch of personal magnetism which was to carry

¹W. Dene, a contemporary notary, in *Anglia Sacra*, i. 367. Cf. Lanercost, 257-258

² *Foedera*, ii. 650.

³ *Scalacronica*, 152.

Edward III. and Henry V through the rough seas of their own times, though only to increase the problems which their unfortunate successors would have to face.

Edward was yet to be formally deposed. The revolutionaries had declared that, because the King had broken his coronation oath, his subjects could renounce their allegiance and consequently depose him. This doctrine, first fully enunciated during the troubles over Gaveston, was now put in actual use, but constitutional theory was not sufficiently far advanced for the acceptance of the axiom that kingship was a matter of contract, though the coronation charters issued by various kings might suggest the idea to the philosophers of a later age. Moreover, the still more democratic theory enunciated by the turncoat Archbishop of Canterbury, in his cry "the voice of the people is the voice of God," would in those days appeal to a very restricted circle of politicians. The one thing needed to secure the revolutionary settlement was to obtain the resignation of Edward II., whom many regarded as rightful monarch till by his own consent he had resigned that position. Attempts had been made to procure the presence of the captive King at the recent transactions at Westminster, but without success,¹ and so it was after the drastic action of deposition had taken place that Edward was induced to legalise that which had been done in haste and without the observation of formalities. An important embassy waited upon him at Kenilworth, but before it was received in audience the Bishops of Hereford and Winchester interviewed the King in secret, and what with promises of honourable treatment in the future, and what with warnings that a refusal to abdicate in the present excited state of popular feeling might mean the loss of the throne not only to himself but also to his son, they so worked on the captive's feelings as to induce him to agree to their requests. Clad in a black robe of mourning, he received the other members of the deputation, but before a word could be spoken he fell over in a dead faint. When he had recovered, Orleton introduced the deputation in a speech which explained its mission, and with tears the King assented to the demand of Parliament. On the following day Sir William Trussell in the name of the whole Parliament renounced the allegiance sworn by the various members to the

¹ Lanercost, 257; Brut, 241.

King, and the deputation returned to London to report the success of its mission.¹ Edward III's reign had begun

Baker, 26-28; giving information obtained from his patron Sir Thomas de la More, who was present at the interview with the King in the train of the Bishop of Winchester. *Cf. Brut*, 241-242; *Lanercost*, 258.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RULE OF MORTIMER AND THE SCOTTISH WAR
(1327-1340)

THOUGH his peace was proclaimed on January 24th,¹ and he was crowned with due solemnity on February 1st, Edward III was King only in name—he was but fourteen years old. His mother and Mortimer were supreme, and for the next few years mismanaged the affairs of the nation quite as effectively as had the man whom they deposed, for when they came to rule they found immorality and sentimentality formed no basis on which to raise strong governance. Not were their supporters one whit superior either in intellect or honesty to the Despensers. The Bishop of Lincoln had been inspired only by a desire to revenge the death of his uncle Badlesmere, Stratford, though perhaps more of a statesman, was little less of a traitor, Orlton, prime mover in the whole disastrous business, was totally unprincipled and efficient only in intrigue, the Earl of Kent was a weakling. Henry Earl of Leicester alone had acted with discretion and moderation throughout this difficult period. Joining the opposition as the natural heir to the Lancastrian tradition, he gave the enemies of Edward II. an invaluable air of respectability, of which they showed themselves conscious by putting him forward, and making capital out of the memory of Earl Thomas. Though an attempt to secure Lancaster a place among the saints was not successful, the condemnation passed upon him was reversed, so that his brother might inherit the titles and possessions to which he had only been partially restored, and as the King's most important relation, the new Earl of Lancaster was appointed guardian of his person and placed first on the list of councillors to advise him in all matters.² As heirs to the

¹ *Foedera*, II. 683. The reign is dated from January 25th in official documents.

² This Council was largely composed of men devoted to Isabella and Mortimer, though the Archbishop of York, a steadfast adherent of Edward II., could not be excluded. Hemingburgh, II. 300; Knighton, I. 447.

Lancastrian tradition of feigned constitutionalism, the new Government hastened to reissue the charters in confirmation of English liberties, adding some clauses with regard to the administration of justice, and granting relief from certain royal exactions. One piece of legislation betrayed the hand of Orlton and the other unfaithful ecclesiastics, for the Crown renounced the right, so freely exercised of late, of seizing the temporalities of the bishops. Civic liberties were confirmed, but London was chosen for special marks of favour. Not only was its now time-honoured right to elect its Mayor restored, but special new charters were granted, forgiving the City the debt owed to the Crown, reducing the annual ferm of the Sheriffwick to the sum that it had been before its increase in 1270, allowing the citizens to devise real estate within the City, and establishing a monopoly, dear to the medieval mind, by forbidding any market to be held within seven miles of the City. Thus was London rewarded for the murder of Stapeldon and the destruction of all law and order.

But though the first acts of the new reign bore a fair exterior, the spirit inspiring the new rulers was one of selfishness and an entire disregard of national interests. The Queen betrayed her rapacity by taking for her own use two-thirds of the Crown property, and leaving a mere modicum upon which her son had to sustain the royal dignity, but worse was the treatment meted out to her husband. She was said to live in terror of being compelled to return to him, and to be convinced that, if he ever got free, he would murder her.¹

The prisoner was soon removed from the courteous custody of the Earl of Lancaster to that of Sir Thomas Gurney and Sir John Maltravers, who were ordered to take him from place to place, so that his friends might not know his whereabouts. From Kenilworth he was taken to Corfe, and from Corfe to Bristol, but as in the latter city there were too many signs of sympathy with the captive, he was removed secretly to Berkeley Castle. Acting under instructions his gaolers treated him with great severity and insolence.² When Thomas Lord Berkeley showed courtesy to the unwilling guest under

¹ W. Dene in *Anglia Sacra*, i. 367.

² The story is told that, on the way to Berkeley, Edward was suddenly ordered to be shaved to remove possibility of recognition. When ditch-water alone was available the helpless Edward sat weeping for hot water on a molehill.

his roof, he was cut off from all communication with the prisoner. Edward was submitted to all kinds of hardships in the hope of bringing about his death, and finally, when neither pneumonia nor dysentery would come to the aid of his tormentors, was barbarously slain on the night of September 21st, while Lord Berkeley was absent at his manor of Bradley. Roused by screams emanating from the castle, the inhabitants of Berkeley suspected the tragedy that was taking place, and next morning their suspicion was confirmed by the exposition of the body of the late King, who was said to have died in the course of nature during the night.¹ Edward's body found a last resting-place in the Abbey Church of Gloucester, and there in later times a splendid tomb, which survives to-day, was raised to his memory.

Isabella and her abettors had miscalculated when they ordered the death of her husband. They had won success by playing on the string of popular sentiment, now they gave a different course to this sentimentality, which naturally seized upon the last victim to fate as an object of veneration. Alive, Edward II. was but an object of scornful pity: dead, he cried aloud for the vengeance of his wrongs. But it was not only in matters of sentiment that the new Government alienated the sympathies of the nation. In its foreign policy it trod so closely in the footsteps of Edward II., that the charge brought against that King of losing Scotland and Gascony recoiled on its authors. As to Gascony, on March 31st 1327, a treaty was signed in Paris, and ratified on April 11th in England, whereby most of the points claimed by Charles IV. were ceded, parts only of Gascony were restored to the English king at the cost of a large money indemnity, and many faithful Gascons were surrendered to the tender mercies of the French king.² Furthermore, when Charles IV. died and Philip of Valois succeeded to the throne, Edward was sent over to do homage for Aquitaine, without ever raising the question of those parts of the duchy which had not yet been restored.³ No less yielding was the attitude towards Scotland. One of the earliest acts of the reign was to confirm the treaty made with the Scots, but peace was not kept, and the young King was sent to the North at the head of an army.

The campaign was a failure, as much owing to quarrels between

¹ Baker, 29-34.

² Foedera, II. 700-701, 703.

³ *Ibid.*, 764, 765; Baker, 43. But the power to do so was specially reserved.

the English levies and the Hainault mercenaries, as to the superior skill of the Scots, and at length, dispirited and out-manœuvred, Edward was obliged to return to York, bitterly bewailing the ignominious outcome of his first campaign. The result could not well have been otherwise. The Scots were splendidly equipped for speedy movement. They were all mounted, with no impedimenta and little provision for the way. They drank the water of the rivers, depended on the cattle of the district for meat, and for the rest contented themselves with a bag of oatmeal at their back and a little tin plate under their saddle flap to make oat-cakes.¹ The English on the contrary were obsessed with feudal grandeur, were clothed in the bright liveries of their lords, and thought more of display than of military efficiency.²

Accordingly, negotiations were opened at York, since arms had failed, and on March 17th, 1328, a fresh treaty was signed by Bruce at Edinburgh and confirmed by the English King in the Parliament of Northampton on May 4th. The King of England definitely renounced the claim of overlordship over Scotland put forward by Edward I, in return for which Bruce agreed to pay £20,000. The stone of Scone was to be returned, and Robert's son David was to marry Edward's seven-year-old sister, Joanna of the Tower. On such terms perpetual peace was declared. The wisdom of thus accepting what was an accomplished fact cannot be denied, but the men who had joined in deposing Edward II because he had dragged the name of England in the dust were by no means satisfied. On all sides there rose a chorus of disapproval. Isabella and Mortimer, it was said, had engineered this "Shameful Peace," mainly to secure themselves a refuge in Scotland if their power should fall. England was disgraced even more than in the days of the late King. The Abbot of Westminster voiced public opinion by refusing to allow the sacred stone of Scone to be removed from his church, as meaning the abrogation of all for which Edward I had fought.

The outcry against the "Shameful Peace" was but a sign of the times. Mortimer and Isabella were not only discredited, they were daily becoming more unpopular. Mortimer especially attracted men's attention by making no effort to conceal his relations with the Queen-mother. He accumulated large estates, and aped the

¹ Jean le Bel, i 47-48.

² Brut, 249.

manners of loyalty, keeping a retinue of one hundred and eighty knights. The marriages of his daughters to men of importance provoked hostile comment, which rose to a roar when in the Parliament held at Salisbury in October, 1328, he had conferred upon him the hitherto unknown title of Earl of March.¹ So obvious were the intentions of the guilty couple to turn all things to their own personal advantage, that the Earl of Lancaster was at last induced to move. Supported by the Earl Marshal and the Earl of Kent, both brothers of the late King, he refused to attend the Parliament at Salisbury, putting forward as his excuse a list of charges against Isabella and her lover. Unless the power of the Council was restored, he could not attend Parliament. To support his words he mustered an armed force, and took care to approach the London authorities with a view to winning them over to his cause. Even Stratford had joined the opposition, and induced the Londoners to urge the King to redress these grievances. Six hundred Londoners marched out secretly to help the Earl. Meanwhile, Archbishop Meopham, who had just succeeded the unworthy Reynolds at Canterbury, strove to collect a party of ecclesiastics and barons to support Lancaster, and conferred with them at Blackfriars on New Year's Day, 1329. Mortimer retaliated by ravaging the Earl's possessions, and on January 5th he occupied Leicester, the centre of his opponent's power. With a considerable army, containing many of the more sober magnates, including the Bishops of London and Winchester,² Lancaster marched north, but at Bedford he learnt that the King's uncles Edmund of Kent and Thomas of Norfolk had gone over to the enemy. By the intervention of the Archbishop of Canterbury terms were arranged, whereby Lancaster was pardoned on the payment of £11,000 and a promise that his grievances would be redressed in the next Parliament. Thus once more a Lancastrian party had risen against a royal favourite, once more a temporary compromise had been patched up, and once more the favourite hastened the crisis by his attempts to crush his enemies. The King's elder uncle was the chief victim. Edmund of Kent had

¹ *Brut*, 260, 261-262, 268, 271, Baker, 42, 45, Knighton, i. 449-450; Hemingburg, ii. 300.

² Stratford had narrowly escaped being murdered by Mortimer's orders (Stephen Birchington in *Anglia Sacra*, i. 19), his arrest had been ordered on November 11th (Foedera, ii. 753).

made his peace, but he was marked out for destruction. His particularly weak character made it easy for his enemies to tempt him to an indiscretion, and when he was told a long story of how his brother Edward was still alive and confined in Corfe Castle, he readily believed the tale, and secured confirmation of it from a friar preacher whom he sent to investigate the matter. In so doing the Earl of Kent was merely following the trend of public opinion, for the growing hatred of Mortimer led men to give ready credence to such stories.¹ On the strength of this information the Earl was persuaded to write a letter to the brother whom he imagined to be still alive, which was promptly conveyed to Mortimer, who in conjunction with Isabella induced the King to summon his uncle to Winchester. Confronted in full Parliament with his letter, Kent confessed that he had been moving to obtain the liberation of the late King, whom he believed to be still alive, and gave a long list of people who had urged him to take this course. Mortimer must have been unpleasantly surprised at the large number of influential persons who were cognisant of this enterprise, but this did not deter him from demanding the extreme penalty, and Edmund was led out to execution.

Though no tears were shed for Kent's unhappy fate, since his household's depredations and their unprincipled purveyance had rendered him very unpopular,² his execution made men realise their danger, and the Earl of Lancaster in particular saw that he would be the next victim. Stricken with blindness since his recent failure, he had to resign the lead to men of less importance, such as Sir William Montacute and Sir Humphrey de Bohun. They adopted the wise plan of working on the King's pride, pointing out to him that all said that Mortimer's aim was the throne itself. Edward was beginning to feel the ignominy of his position. He was now

¹ In 1877 there was discovered in the episcopal archives of Maguelone a document purporting to be a letter written by Manuele del Fiesco, Canon of York and Papal Notary to Edward III, giving the substance of a confession made to him by Edward II. The story therein contained was to the effect that Edward escaped from Berkeley Castle in his keeper's clothes, wandered through Germany and Italy, finally settling down in a Lombard castle, where he ended his days as a hermit. The authenticity of the document is at least suspicious, though it may have been a contemporary forgery produced for political reasons. See Constantino Nigra, "Uno degli Edoardi in Italia. Favola o Storia" in *Nuova Antologia* (April, 1910), 4th series, vol. xcii. 403-425, where the letter is printed *in extenso*.

² Baker, 44; Murimuth, 60.

seventeen years old, of man's estate as age was counted in those days. At York, during the Scottish campaign, he had been married to Philippa of Hainault, who had lately given birth to a son and heir, and it was not becoming the dignity of a King, a husband, and a father to be thus dragged at the heels of an adulterous mother and her lover, who dared to take precedence of him.¹ When he attended the Parliament which met at Nottingham in the autumn, he gave his consent to a plot to seize the Queen and favourite. Some inkling of the conspiracy must have got abroad, for at Mortimer's suggestion Isabella retired to rest with the keys of the Castle of Nottingham under her pillow. But under the King's instructions the constable of the castle led the conspirators through an underground passage into the castle-yard, where they rushed to Mortimer's chamber, cutting down all who resisted, and despite the cries of Isabella, who was found there, dragged their victim before the King. Edward at once took action. On October 20th he announced the arrest of the Earl of March, and his intention to govern the kingdom himself in the future, and a few days later he ordered a new Parliament to meet at Westminster, since that assembled at Nottingham was not considered suitably representative of the nation. Mortimer was conveyed to London, and tried before the magnates in assembly at Westminster. There he was condemned without a hearing, and on November 29th suffered a traitor's death at the Elms at Tyburn. The charges brought against him were very varied. He had set aside the Council, brought discord into the realm, lured Kent to his death, attacked Lancaster, and murdered the late King, not to mention the embezzlement of the £20,000 paid by the Scots, and other peculations. Thus fell the third favourite since the days of Edward I. and the least worthy. He had few redeeming virtues and no strength of character to palliate his vices. He had climbed to power by methods even less worthy than those of his predecessors, and had used that power for a brief day in even a more shameful way. His supporters were mostly allowed to escape, and the King showed a wisdom beyond his years in dealing with his mother. No whisper of her shame was allowed to creep into the indictment brought against her lover; as a chronicler discreetly put it, other

¹ A letter written by Edward to the Pope shows that he had been planning the overthrow of Mortimer for some time (*Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xxvi. 331-332).

reasons for Mortimer's death were not revealed to the populace,¹ but Isabella was shorn of all power and her lands were taken from her, though a suitable allowance was made for the upkeep of a household worthy of her position. Though she was not kept a prisoner, as foreign chroniclers state, her movements were controlled by her son till her death at Hertford Castle on August 22nd, 1358.² With the execution of Mortimer and the removal of Isabella the scene changes. A young prince with ambitious ideas now sat upon the throne, and under his guidance England was to pass through times of martial glory and military triumph, only to experience another reaction, when the tragedy of Edward II. was to find so close a parallel in that of his great-grandson Richard.

The outstanding events of the thirty years, which separate the fall of Mortimer from the Treaty of Brétigny, by attracting the attention and kindling the imagination tend to obscure the fact that beneath the glories of war a nation was developing, and developing on lines laid down by Edward I., blurred but not obliterated by Edward II.'s folly. All through the reign of the last King the voice of the chronicler spoke of a growing national spirit, which resented the way England had been dragged in the dust and had been defied by France and Scotland. National spirit had not been translated into action because there was none to take the lead—no man of striking personality to vivify an ideal, failing him, no man of transparent honesty whom all could trust. But the material was there. Had Lancaster, Mortimer, nay even Despenser, possessed either of the two necessary qualities for leadership, he could have inspired the nation. As it was, England had to wait for a youthful king, who with all his faults—and they were many—was possessed of vitalising energy, which helped to concentrate national aspirations for the brief but effective heyday of his power, and to win the affectionate admiration of his subjects. Edward III.'s characteristics helped both to make and to mar the nation; they created the first real spontaneous outburst of English patriotism, and they prepared the way for the social and political disasters which came to a head in his grandson's reign. He had the necessary striking personality, but not the

¹ Baker, 48, Lanercost, 266, is not so discreet.

² Knighton, i. 484; *Gesta Edwardi III*, 102; *Eulogium Historiarum*, iii. 227. See "The Last Days of Queen Isabella" in *Archæologia*, xxxv. 453-469. She was buried at the Grey Friars in London.

intellectual depth which alone makes a great character. His virtues and vices alike were summed up in his splendid physical strength. The time had not yet come when men could be led by intellect alone. A Gian Galeazzo Visconti, triumphing over his enemies and building up a great state from the seclusion of his council chamber, might be possible in fourteenth-century Italy but not in fourteenth-century England. Edward I.'s success was due to his intellect, but that intellect would never have had an opportunity to assert itself had it not been seated in a splendid human frame. Edward III. had the frame without the intellect. True, he was said to have been educated by the careful counsel of Richard of Bury, who by his own confession preferred manuscripts to money and "slender pamphlets to pampered palfieys";¹ true, he was not slow to understand the value of literary retainers, but his actions his statesmanship, his ideas were those of one who glories in his animal strength. It was his prowess in the tournament and his reputation as a warrior which raised the enthusiasm of chroniclers, who found no British sovereign to compare with him save the romantic Arthur, the soul of chivalry and the master of knightly prowess. He was a born soldier if never a great tactician, and the active part of his life was devoted to a war of his own seeking. Selfish and headstrong in satisfying his own particular tastes, he did not think of the interests of his kingdom. Self-indulgent from first to last, it was his good chance that his earlier warlike indulgences kindled the imagination of his people, just as his later amorous ones provoked the unqualified censure of his warmest admirers. At the same time it would be unfair to say that Edward, like Richard I., merely looked on England as a place to provide him with money to indulge his tastes. At times he could give the nation an ideal, as when through the mouth of his Chancellor he declared that England lay nearer to his heart, was to him a place more full of delight and honour than any other country in the world.² This language was a sign of the times; it shows that selfishness in the sovereign needed a cloak, and the cloak worn by Edward III. helped to teach the Englishman the lesson of patriotism. Edward III. crystallised national feeling, showing Englishmen that they could hold their own on the battle-fields of Europe. The little island in the north of Europe was almost an unknown quantity to

¹ *Philobiblon*, ed. E C Thomas (1903), 123.

² Rot. Parl., II. 289.

the statesmen of the Continent, except in so far as its ruler was a powerful vassal of the King of France. Edward placed it amongst the first powers of the civilised world, if only for a time. A war, illegitimate in its intention, and disastrous in its ultimate consequences, pulled the nation together, carried it outside the petty domains of party politics, made it feel its strength, and cultivated confidence in itself. In a word, Edward raised the enthusiasm of his subjects, and thus served, quite unconsciously, the people whom he ruled. Apart from this, his personal qualities were not remarkable. He was a stickler for the formalities of religion, a constant pilgrim to shrines, a founder of religious houses, such as the Abbey of St Mary Graces near the Tower, but there are no signs in him of deep, true religious feeling. He was open-handed, ready to make gifts, extravagant and luxurious in his tastes, and above all, a man full of animal spirits, energetic almost to the point of restlessness, one who must needs have some vent for these spirits and this energy, else evil would befall both himself and the nation.

The young King's position was less difficult than the recent disturbances would suggest. Execution and natural causes, which had depleted the ranks of the nobility, gave the new King the opportunity to raise men well affected to himself. No less than seven Earls were created in the beginning of the reign. The son of Henry of Lancaster was given the Earldom of Derby, William de Bohun that of Northampton, William de Montacute was created Earl of Salisbury, Robert Ufford Earl of Suffolk, Hugh de Audley Earl of Gloucester, and William Clinton Earl of Huntingdon. The Earldom of Devon had already been conferred on the family of Courtenay. It is true that a certain amount of insubordination survived as the legacy of the last reign. A judge might be seized and held to ransom by lawless freebooters, two barons could so far forget the respect due to royalty as to come to blows in Parliament, and a royal official might slay a rival under the very eyes of the King. But such behaviour was sternly repressed, and soon the country settled down to comparative peace and quietness, though the King's extravagance spread dismay among his subjects when his agents exacted the harassing and often condemned right of purveyance. Edward's superfluous energy had to exhaust itself in tournaments and feastings. His career as a soldier had not yet begun.

There were two possible enemies on whom he might try his sword—Scotland and France. For a time peace reigned with both on the basis of the treaties made by Mortimer and Isabella, but it would not be hard to pick a quarrel with either. Scotland was the first to offer the opportunity, though the boy David Bruce had succeeded his father Robert in 1329 in all quietness, and was allied by marriage to Edward. In England generally there was a desire to wipe out the disgrace of the "Shameful Peace," and certain nobles—the "Disinherited"—Englishmen who had lost estates in Scotland, or Scots who had adhered too long to the English party, had a grievance, in that they had not been restored to their Scottish lands as promised in the treaty. Edward Balliol, the son of the late King John who had died an exile in France, saw an opportunity to assert his claims to the Scottish throne with English assistance. Edward III., though he had made representations to the Scottish Government about the "Disinherited," felt unable to countenance Balliol's project, since he was bound under the penalty of a fine to observe the treaty arranged for him while still under tutelage. He enjoined on his subjects the necessity of keeping the peace, forbade the army which had been raised by Balliol to march through England, and appointed Henry Percy Guardian of the Marches, with strict instructions to see that no force passed into Scotland. Nevertheless, it was believed at the time that the proposed expedition had his secret support.¹ The overland route being barred, Balliol, David Earl of Athol, and Henry de Beaumont, who claimed the Comyn lands, set sail from Ravenspur in Yorkshire on July 31st, 1332, with their forces and reached Kinghorn on August 6th, where the Scots who tried to prevent their landing were easily put to flight. From Kinghorn the invading army marched by Dunfermline towards Perth, and was met at the River Earn by the hastily levied forces of Donald Earl of Mar, an incompetent mediocrity though now regent.

The Scottish army, estimated variously at anything between twenty and forty thousand men, was encamped on Dupplin Moor; opposing them, on the other side of the river, was the far inferior force of the "Disinherited," consisting of about three thousand foot and a few hundred horse at the most, nearly all English, though

¹ Knighton, i. 461.

a few Hainault mercenaries and a sprinkling of Scots helped to make up the numbers. Such a diminutive invading force could only hope for success through the exercise of unflinching bravery and unhesitating daring. While Mar was preparing for an engagement on the following day, the English slipped across under cover of night by a ford known to some of their Scottish allies, and fell upon the camp of their foes, where they did much slaughter. When day dawned they saw the main body under the regent himself advancing in one mass to the attack, and realising their danger retired to a slight eminence to receive the charge of this far superior force. But the Scots, though numerous, were disorganised levies, while the English were picked and disciplined men, commanded by one who knew the weakness and the strength of Scottish tactics. When the hill-top was reached the whole English force, save some forty German mercenaries kept in reserve, was dismounted, the men-at-arms drawn up in the centre, the archers thrown forward loosely on each flank so as to make a concave formation within which to receive the Scottish charge. When the shock came, the English centre reeled for a moment, but held its ground long enough to enable the archers on the flanks to pour a ceaseless fire into the compact body of the enemy. More and more pressed together by this flank attack, the Scots wavered and then fled, leaving a dense pile of slain in front of the shaken but still unbroken English line.¹

The victory of Dupplin Moor, the greatest triumph the archers had hitherto secured, was absolutely decisive. The combination of lance and bow was irresistible against a blind uncalculated charge. The tactics begun in the Welsh wars, and developed by Edward I. in Scotland, had been carried one step further on the road to universal recognition. For Balliol the victory meant much. Perth fell into his hands, and he was crowned at Scone in full armour surrounded by his armed friends. Edward III's hitherto correct attitude broke down before the argument that as Scotland had deposed her King, treaties made in the past were void. By November 23rd Balliol had promised to do homage for Scotland, to lead his army in support of his overlord whenever summoned, to yield the border town of Berwick, and even to marry Edward's little

¹ *Vita Edwardi III.*, 104-107; Melsa, II. 362-365; Lanercost, 267-268; Knighton, I. 462-463, Hemingburgh, II. 304-305. For the significance of the battle in military history, see article by Dr. Morris in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, XII. 430-431.

sister Joan, if her betrothal to his rival David Bruce did not take place. From beginning to end the morality—even the political morality—of Edward's attitude is at least doubtful. Balliol confessed that what success he had already attained had been solely due to Edward's subjects and to Edward's connivance. He was by no means secure upon his throne, and yet the English King treated him as an undisputed sovereign, and took advantage of his weakness to reassert the claims put forward by Edward I. but formally renounced only a few years before. Once more a Balliol was to be a puppet king in the hands of an English overlord. How entirely Balliol's hold over Scotland depended on English aid was dramatically illustrated before long. On December 17th he was surprised at Annan by his enemies, when most of his English supporters had returned home, and barely escaped with his life to England. Edward, now too deeply implicated in Balliol's fortunes to refuse open support, seized the excuse which the Scots offered by renewing their harassing raids on the lands of the perfidious English. To himself he declared that the peace he had signed with the Scots had been made under the compulsion of Mortimer, to the world he maintained that the Scots had broken the peace by crossing the Border. The feudal levy was called out for May 30th at Newcastle, the borders were to be cleared of cattle, and engines of war were to be made at York to facilitate the siege of Berwick which had already been begun by Balliol.¹

By May 20th Edward himself had joined the forces before Berwick and proceeded to blockade the place, which was now too strong to be taken by assault, owing to his grandfather's fortifications. A long and tedious siege ensued, during which a portion of the town was burnt, but though the besieged were heartened by the news of a rising in the ever-troublesome Wales, and the supporters of David tried to make a diversion by harrying England, all was of no avail, and on July 15th it was agreed that the town, if not relieved before the 20th, should be surrendered. Edward was thus placed in an advantageous position. Though invading a hostile country, he could assume the defensive if attacked by a relieving force, the garrison at Berwick being too worn out to create a diversion in the rear, though when it was known that the Scottish army was advancing,

¹ *Foedera*, II. 855-856, *Vita Edwardi III.*, 109-110, *Lanercost*, 270-273, *Hemingsburgh*, II. 306-307.

he placed an adequate force in the trenches, before drawing off his main body to join issue with the enemy. On the morning of July 19th the English army took up its position on Halidon Hill in three divisions, the centre being commanded by the King, with his uncle Thomas of Norfolk, the Earl Marshal, on his right, and on his left Edward Balliol. The latter with Henry de Beaumont had been responsible for the victory of Dupplin Moor, and it was therefore probably at their suggestion that each division had small wings of archers and that the knights and men-at-arms were dismounted and fought on foot, to the astonishment of at least one English chronicler who looked upon this as a great innovation.¹ The battle that ensued was almost an exact repetition of Dupplin Moor. The Scots, more than double the number of the English, advanced in four battalions and tried to dash up the hill in close formation. Again the archers on the English flanks did their work, and so effectively, that only a straggling remnant of the Scottish host reached the English lines. The battle was won before the English men-at-arms had struck a blow. Again the slaughter was tremendous, though the English, who had practically not fought at all, boasted the wonderfully small death-toll of one knight, one man-at-arms, and a few foot.² Nothing could be a greater vindication for the new tactics. The Scots had not progressed in the art of war. They fought both at Halidon Hill and at Dupplin Moor in the way that had brought victory at Bannockburn, though the cases were not similar. At Bannockburn they had been on the defensive, in the other two engagements they had been compelled to take the offensive, and the pike was a far more serviceable weapon in defence than in attack. Above all at Bannockburn the English neglected their archers, while at Dupplin Moor and Halidon Hill the day had been won by the archer, and in the last case by the archer alone. Edward's first great victory at once won for him the affections of a people dispirited by constant defeat at the hands of the Scots. English pride revived, the English King had struck the spark of his first success, and his joyful subjects gave vent to their rising spirits in a ballad which flung the triumphal song of the Scottish maidens after Bannockburn back in their teeth:—

¹ Baker, 51.

² This is discounted by the fact that the whole of the Newcastle contingent including seventeen men-at-arms and thirty hoblars were slain. *Cal. of Close Rolls (1333-1337)*, 200.

Skottes out of Berwick and of Abirdene,
 At the Bannok burn war ye to kene;
 Thare slogh ye many sakles, als it was sene,
 And now has King Edward wroken it, I wene.¹

Thus was the morale of King Edward's subjects restored. The immediate result of the victory was the surrender of Berwick and the restoration of Balliol to the throne of Scotland. The little King David was carried off to Dumbarton, where he was closely guarded from attack until the continued successes of his rival induced his friends to send him with his wife to France.² But Scotland was not conquered. The Bruce tradition was too strong, and few except time-servers rallied to the cause of Balliol, too obviously the English King's puppet to draw any national party to his side. Moreover, Edward was foolish enough to emphasise the dependence of his subject King. Not satisfied by the homage performed by Balliol at Newcastle on June 19th, 1334, he compelled him to surrender not only the town of Berwick—the covenanted price of his assistance—but also great part of Southern Scotland including Edinburgh, Selkirk, and Dumfries. English sheriffs were appointed to the counties, and an English Justiciar was placed over Lothian. The effect of such diastic annexations was to stultify English policy in Scotland, and to prevent any possibility of Balliol being a really effective support to his overlord, since his position could not be maintained without constant assistance. Edward had undertaken a task which had defied the energy and ability of his grandfather under far more favourable circumstances, and more than this, he had undertaken it in a spirit of bravado rather than as part of a well-defined policy. He had undoubtedly provoked the new Scottish war, and thereby laid up a store of trouble, when he discovered that more glory was to be won on the plains of France than in the moors and hills of Scotland, and therefore abandoned the idea of controlling the Scottish king for the more startling project of securing the French throne.

Edward's Scottish policy would be negligible were it not for the military importance of the battles, and for the part to be played by Scotland during the French war. While the Bruce party was steadily driven into the arms of France, there was a constant see-saw

¹ The poems of Lawrence Minot, ed. by Joseph Hall (Oxford, 1887), p. 4, and in Political Songs (Rolls Series), 61.

² Lanercost, 278.

of power between the two Scottish factions according to the degree that Edward was able to support Balliol. As soon as the English had withdrawn in 1334, the Scots rose against their King—too much the son of his father to be able to control unruly subjects—drove him to Berwick, and once more asserted the claims of David. Flight was becoming a habit with Balliol, as was appeal to Edward, and in November the two kings advanced to Roxburgh, where they wintered. Edward, realising by now that the conquest of Scotland was no holiday task, prepared for a determined effort and transferred the law courts from Westminster to York, as was the custom when the King anticipated a long sojourn in the northern districts. Scotland was overrun by the English forces in the spring and again in the autumn, a short truce in the summer having been procured by the intervention of the King of France. In August the Earl of Athol and a considerable party of Bruce adherents capitulated. Balliol had become a mere cipher, but though Edward was practically King of Scotland, the troubles with France were steadily taking precedence of Scottish affairs in his mind. When Athol, who had been made his representative in Scotland, was slain, he again went northwards, but very little was done, and the end of 1336 saw him back in England with little likelihood of speedy return. In his various campaigns after Halidon Hill Edward never got into touch with the Scots, who retired before his advance, and refused to meet him in open field, using with triumphant success the tactics which were to prove so useful to the French later in the reign. The outstanding event of 1338 was the long siege of Dunbar Castle, defended so gallantly by the Countess of March in her husband's absence that the Earl of Salisbury, who commanded the besiegers, was compelled to abandon the task. So the war dragged on, a series of petty sieges and insignificant skirmishes, the English being slowly driven from the country, much in the same way as they had been expelled by Robert Bruce, though there was no Barbour to cherish the details and surround every little incident with the romance of chivalry. Edward Balliol became more and more a king without a kingdom, watching from England Edward's forces trying to maintain a hold over his inheritance. At last so secure was the Bruce party by 1340, that King David and his Queen were able to return, and the failure of Edward III's first aggressive policy was complete.

CHAPTER IX

THE QUARREL WITH FRANCE
(1328-1348)

If Edward had hoped by his interference in Scotland to protect his rear in case of a French war, he had grievously miscalculated. The Scots were now more ready than ever to assist France against England, and the opportunity to give such assistance might come at any time. The relation of Edward with France had been complicated by the death in 1328 of Charles IV without heirs, though he left his wife *enceinte*. The posthumous child proved to be a daughter, the possibility of whose succession was never entertained, since the successive exclusion of the daughters of Louis X and Philip V. in favour of their uncles had established the principle that women could not succeed to the French throne. A difficult problem had still to be solved. The senior representative of the male branch of the Capetian House was Philip of Valois, first cousin to the last three kings, and grandson of Philip III., but it might be argued that a woman, though incapable of reigning herself, could bridge over a gap in the male line and hand on the succession to her son. Edward II's widow could not occupy the French throne as heiress to her defunct brother, but could she not hand on her claims to her son Edward III., the nearest male heir of the eldest branch of Philip III.'s descendants?¹ There is little doubt that Edward I. would have seized upon such an opportunity to turn legal argument to his own advantage, and even Mortimer and Isabella strove in a feeble way to assert claims which were in no way hostile to the ideas of the age, but considerations of expediency outweighed those of strict legality. The French magnates possessed a sufficient glimmering of national feeling to declare that they would not allow the kingdom to become an appanage of

¹ The daughters of Louis X. and Philip V. had as yet borne no male heir.

the English crown, and with one voice proclaimed Philip of Valois as their sovereign.

The claims of Edward had been officially put forward with some show of substantiating them by force, but when Philip sent over a demand that his vassal of Aquitaine should perform the homage due to him as King of France, followed by an ultimatum in 1329, a promise to do so speedily was given. On June 6th Edward did homage in person at Amiens, but the question was not thereby settled, since the English pleaded ignorance of the French language as an excuse for refusing liege homage to Philip and limiting the oath to one of fealty, saving the rights and claims of their sovereign. After Edward had become King in fact as well as name in 1330, he received a peremptory summons to Paris to renew his homage without reservations : he replied in the following March by acknowledging the oath taken at Amiens as liege homage, and thus definitely renouncing his claim to the French throne¹.

The horizon seemed clear. But though English claims to the French throne might appear to be abandoned, there were still countless opportunities for friction between the two countries. The dangerous experiment of a joint crusade was suggested as a means of cementing the kings' friendship, but the project came to nothing, and a war between the two would-be crusaders themselves became more and more inevitable. Peace was not a normal relation between France and England at this period. Edward's father and grandfather alike had had friction with their overlord, and more and more did it become apparent that feudal ideas could not solve a problem of such complicated relations as existed between the two sovereigns. Edward, like all kings who come young to power, was filled with a sense of his dignity, and as supreme monarch in England, he did not take kindly to vassalage in France. But his policy was not aggressive at the outset. It fell to Philip to act the provocative part, for he was determined to strike the blow that would crown the policy of his predecessors, and incorporate Aquitaine as part of the personal inheritance of the French throne. But he was too self-confident, too sure that nothing could undermine his power, too contemptuous of English resources. This over-confidence led him to neglect the great opportunity to crush his future rival while the war in Scotland monopolised English attention. Edward on

¹ *Foedera*, II. 813.

his side was not blind to the danger of an attack from France whilst he was employed in the North. During the siege of Berwick he took the precaution to fortify Dover, and to urge his subjects, most especially those who were sailors, to refrain from offering any provocation to the French which might cause an outbreak of war.¹ Again, in 1334, when he was contemplating another invasion of Scotland, he wrote to Philip to revive negotiations with regard to outstanding difficulties in Guienne, and sought to keep him from active interference by assuring him of his desire for peace and his belief that the negotiations would tend to a happy issue.² Yet Philip did give some half-hearted help to the Scots. He could claim that if Edward sheltered Robert of Artois, exiled from France on the charge of forgery and the suspicion of poisoning,³ he was at liberty to shelter David Bruce the exiled King of Scotland. Indeed so suspicious was the favour shown to this fugitive, that it was confidently reported that the French king had been acknowledged as overlord of Scotland, and had even declared that Christendom should never have peace till he was lord and emperor of France, England, and Scotland together.⁴ Whatever Philip's pretensions, he was obviously using the Scots as a weapon against Edward. French ships actually bearing arms, ammunition, and men to Scotland were captured in 1337 by English sailors.⁵

Philip, however, did not act with vigour. He might by feudal law have summoned Edward to answer for harbouring Robert of Artois, but this he failed to do for a long time.⁶ He might have seized the opportunity of disputes which arose in 1333 between English and French sailors to bring pressure to bear on Edward, as his predecessors had done in the reign of Edward I., but here, too,

¹ Déprez, *Les Preliminaires de la Guerre de Cent Ans*, 90, quoting Privy Seals.

² *Ibid.*, *Pieces Justificatives*, No. 1, p. 407.

³ Robert claimed the county of Artois as next male heir; it was awarded to his aunt as nearer of kin. He produced charters to prove the custom of male succession, which were proved to be forgeries in the French courts. Soon after his aunt and her daughter died suddenly, under suspicious circumstances. Philip then seized the county and Robert fled for his life.

⁴ Baker, 56.

⁵ Lanercost, 291.

⁶ The picturesque story contained in "The Vows of the Heron" (Political Songs (Rolls Series), 1. 1-25), a poem written probably during the reign of Edward III., and the description of how Robert exacted vows of hostility against France from the King and his courtiers, must be treated as apocryphal in detail, though it is probably true in spirit.

he failed to press his advantage home. In Aquitaine, however, the old policy of interference was continued by the French, and a long list of outrages on London traders in Gascony was laid before the English Council in 1332, though in the following year Philip ordered his representatives in Toulouse, Saintonge, Perigord, and Agenais not to molest English subjects, but to give them true justice in the courts over which they presided. Philip's conduct on the whole was more correct in form than in spirit, much as Edward's had been quite recently towards Scotland. His great object was to protract the Scottish war, and when this was no longer possible, to act as mediator and judge between the two combatants. He had, however, counted without the Pope. The new occupant of the Papal throne, Benedict XII., was dreaming of a crusade, and to this end desired peace among the Christian nations. His attention was turned to Scotland, and, supported by the College of Cardinals, he wrote to the French King and urged him to abandon his policy of fostering war between the two northern countries.¹ This argument he followed up by dispatching envoys to England, who managed to patch up a truce between England and Scotland. Though Philip's name appeared as a mediator in the preamble of this truce, he had been outmanœuvred by the Pope, who had now taken from him the rôle of arbiter, and quite unintentionally had driven him to become more than ever a partisan of the Scots.

Meanwhile, Edward had been doing his best to postpone the inevitable struggle with France. He wanted peace on the Continent that he might prosecute unhindered his ambitions in Scotland. By 1336, however, he had come to see that his only hope for a clear field in the North was to secure his rear from French attack. To claim the French throne had probably not occurred to him. He wished to dominate Scotland, to wipe out for ever the disgrace of the "Shameful Peace," and to do this he must humble France, or at least make her powerless to do him harm. His earlier attempts to settle French difficulties by diplomacy would have to be abandoned, and though he did not break off diplomatic relations, he began to make preparation for open war. Gascony was to be put in a state of defence; the men of Bayonne were asked to send ships to co-operate with

¹ *Lettres des Papes d'Avignon*, Benoit, xii. (*Bib. des Ecoles Françaises d'Attrènes et de Rome*, 1899, 1902), No. 90. Col. 54-56.

the English against a fleet which was preparing to assist the Scots. Great efforts were made to protect the coasts and to secure a fleet of considerable strength, even to the length of forbidding all merchantmen to sail from English ports. Though the Pope did his best to avert the crisis, Edward's preparations continued unabated throughout the winter of 1336-1337, and in the spring he went so far as to order a Gascon fleet to attack the shipping in the ports of Normandy. He had done his utmost, he averred, to come to terms with the King of France, but all his well-meant endeavours had failed.¹ In other words, Edward had abandoned diplomacy for war as a means of securing his rear.

The traditional policy of English kings when going to war with France was to seek allies in Germany, and Edward had reasons of his own for looking in this direction. His father-in-law, the Count of Holland and Hainault, was his active supporter, and this policy was carried on when the old Count died and his son succeeded to the title. With the Count of Flanders Edward had already quarrelled, but this led him to ally with the Brabanters, the great rivals of the Flemings. A splendid embassy was sent over to the Low Countries under the Bishop of Lincoln, who, by means of lavish promises and heavy payments, secured many of the lesser feudatories of the empire as allies, including the lords of Guelders and Juliers. But Edward's object was to follow still more closely in his grandfather's footsteps, and to become the ally of the Emperor Louis the Bavarian was carrying on a long quarrel with the papacy, notable more for the controversial literature that it produced than for its intrinsic importance. He was also in bad odour with Philip of France, who had driven the unwilling Benedict XII to take up the quarrel begun by his predecessor John XXII. What more natural than that he should join Edward in an attack on France, more particularly as he had married the sister of the English Queen? A hint of such a possibility from Edward drew a long expostulatory letter from the Pope, who forbade any alliance with an excommunicated enemy of the Holy See, and asked somewhat pertinently of what advantage had Edward I.'s imperial alliance been to the English cause. Despite these warnings, Edward pressed forward the alliance, and on August 26th, 1337, agreed to

¹ *Foedera*, II. 965.

a definite treaty based on a large subsidy to the Emperor. It was on this occasion that Edward chose to issue his first definite defiance of Philip, whom he had hitherto acknowledged as King of France, but now and henceforth styled "Philip who calls himself King of the French". The later claim to the throne was foreshadowed. Philip was not slow to reply. Already in May, Guienne had been declared forfeited, and its borders were the scene of mutual attack and defence in which the English held their own. The Channel Islands were harassed by French privateers. Yet Papal envoys still continued to strive for peace. In November two Cardinals arrived in England, and succeeded in obtaining a promise from Edward not to attack France before the following March.¹ English ambassadors were even appointed in the following June to treat with Philip. But the King's real intentions were shown by the fact that as soon as his representatives had left for France, he himself set sail for the Low Countries, and having landed at Antwerp, revoked the powers he had given to treat with Philip as King of France. From Antwerp he went to Coblentz, and there, amidst great solemnities, his alliance with Louis of Bavaria was ratified, and on September 5th he was installed as Vicar of the Empire. He had also secured the friendship if not the support of other interests. Flanders seemed to offer an easy access into France, but its Count Louis de Nevers was loyal to his suzerain,² despite Edward's endeavours to win him from his allegiance by suggesting a marriage with his daughter Joan. Louis, however, was very unpopular with his subjects, and this antagonism had been increased by a commercial quarrel with England in 1336, when by way of retaliation for the arrest of some English merchants in Flanders Edward had seized both the goods and persons of all Flemings then in his country, and had inhibited the export of wool to Flemish ports. This interruption of commercial relations bore very hardly on Flemish trade, since the cloth workers in that country depended almost entirely on England for their raw material. The looms lay idle, and workless citizens began to wander about the country, living evidences of the disastrous results of fidelity to the French alliance.³ At this juncture there arose a leader in the land James van Artevelde, a rich burgher of Ghent, posed as the popular champion in opposition to the Count. By instinct, as well

¹ *Foedera*, II. 1006, 1007.

² *Froissart*, I. 369.

³ *Ibid.*, 370, 388-389.

as by profession, a trader, he was imbued with all the aristocratic and independent ideas which were to make the name of the Hanseatic merchants famous before the century reached its close. Purely selfish in his ideas, politics were to him but a means for the expansion of trade, trade was but a means for the exaltation of his town of Ghent, while Ghent itself took only a second place when the interests of the Guild of Cloth Merchants were concerned. For the moment his whole aim was to restore the supply of wool, and this led him to advise the commonalty of Flanders to conciliate Edward in the interests of Flemish trade. The starving artisans welcomed a policy which promised a return of prosperity, and hung on his words as though he were an oracle.¹ As early as May, 1338, friendly relations had been established between the Flemish towns and England, and by the following June the Bishop of Lincoln in his master's name had signed a definite treaty with the commonalties of Flanders, granting to them free mercantile intercourse with England, in return for a promise not to give any assistance either to France or Scotland. Neutrality has ever been the merchant's policy, and in this case it secured the restoration of commercial relations with England while obviating an open rupture with France. The Flemish burghers cared nothing for the quarrels of kings, so long as they could develop their ventures without interference. It was therefore on his imperial allies alone that Edward could depend for active assistance, and already he had suspected the value of their protestations²

War was inevitable. Already the south coast was being harassed by French privateers. Even before his departure in 1338 Portsmouth had been burnt, and in October Southampton was sacked, while in May, 1339, Norman and Genoese ships threatened Southampton and the Isle of Wight, burnt Hastings, attacked Folkestone and Dover, and ravaged the coasts of Devon and Cornwall. Throughout the south coast fishermen were bewailing the loss of their nets, their ships, and their comrades³. Though negotiations were still continued, and English ambassadors were commissioned to France on July 1st, 1339, Edward's real intentions could no longer be in doubt. Even the peace-loving Benedict XII. must

¹ Le Bel, i. 127-129, 132.

² Knighton, ii. 5.

³ Baker, 62-63, 63-64, Murimuth, 87, 88, 89-90, Melsa, ii. 383, Froissart, i. 153, 158, Knighton, ii. 3, 9.

have lost hope on receiving a letter wherein Edward described his claim to the French throne at great length, alluding to Philip as soi-disant King of France, though without actually claiming the title for himself. After laying the blame for war on his rival, he took pains to justify his acceptance of the imperial vicariate at the hands of an avowed enemy of the Pope, at the same time complaining in bitter but respectful language of the monetary assistance given by Benedict himself to France.¹ The letter throughout shows careful preparation. It was Edward's declaration of policy. He had waited long enough, and was ready to strike at last. His protestations of good intentions, his frequent appeals to the Almighty to witness the purity of his motives and the genuineness of his desire for peace, all ring hollow. He was obviously determined to fight the French King, and his intention to hang over his adversary the possibility of a definite claim to the French throne shines clearly through the language of diplomacy. It was an act of defiance, a justification of his future actions not only to the Pope and Cardinals, to whom it was addressed, but to the general public opinion of Europe.²

Defiance was the prelude to decisive action. Edward's soldiers were getting restive in Brabant, and the expense of keeping them and the mass of foreign allies in idleness was growing burdensome. On September 20th the English host of some 12,000 men marched from Valenciennes, and began to lay waste the region round Cambrai, where the Bishop had declared for France. The town held out, but Edward advanced into French territory, where Philip, though he had collected a large army, made no attempt to check his advance. It seemed obvious that a small force of 12,000 men, most of them German mercenaries and none of them particularly loyal to their leader, could strike no decisive blow at the French kingdom. For five weeks the campaign lasted, but no engagement took place. The allies of the English, headed by the Duke of Brabant, turned mutinous, though a better spirit prevailed when for a moment it seemed that the differences between the two

¹ Murimuth, 91-100; Hemingburgh, II. 316-326, Avesbury, 303; Lanercost, 318, 326.

² The presence of the document in so many chronicles shows that it was sent round to the monasteries to be registered for record purposes. In Murimuth, 100-101, a note summarising the arguments for and against the claim to the French throne is appended by the chronicler.

Kings would be settled by a pitched battle. With all the formalities of chivalry Philip sent a challenge to battle in some open space where nature gave no advantage to either party. It was accepted, but the meeting never took place, for though Edward was ready to give battle the French never appeared. In any case the campaign was over, and Philip had the satisfaction of seeing his enemy retreat across the border without securing either material advantage or personal glory. With one accord the English chroniclers accuse Philip of cowardice, but his inaction, even if caused by supineness, was really the wiser course strategically, though the way his friends tried to put the blame on his opponent seems to suggest that such inaction was likely to have a disastrous effect on the public opinion of the age. In any case accusation and counter-accusation throw an interesting sidelight on the spirit of the times. Edward had published a justification of his invasion, Philip must now be defended against the charge of cowardice before the jury of Europe.

Back at Antwerp, Edward immediately began to seek fresh allies, since the imperial princes had proved themselves at the best an expensive weapon. Harassed by debt, the English King looked once more to the Flemings, and once more a double negotiation was opened, on the one hand, Louis de Nevers being offered the hand of an English princess, on the other, the townsmen, his enemies, being approached to support English aggression. The second alternative was accepted. By the end of January Edward arrived at Ghent, and received a promise of support from the burghers led by Van Artevelde, if he assumed the title of King of France. By the 28th the formal alliance was arranged, and on February 8th he issued a notification that the Flemings had recognised him as King of France, together with a justification of his refusal to consider terms of peace. Edward's necessities had compelled him to throw his last diplomatic card upon the table, and put forth a claim to the French throne. The subtle traders had insisted on the change of style, so that they might attack Philip and their Count, and yet claim that they had not broken faith with the rightful overlord of the country.¹ Such was their argument, based on the decadent feudalism of the age of chivalry; but for themselves a more potent reason for their action was that they realised that a new King of France, assisted by them to the throne, would be obliged to treat them with favour, to grant

¹ Baker, 66; Le Bel, I. 163-164.

them the civic liberty to which they aspired, and to secure their trade in a way Philip had never tried to do. They knew, too, that their support was necessary to Edward, since his debts were so great that before he could leave the Low Countries he was forced to surrender the Earls of Derby and Salisbury as hostages for the repayment of his obligations to the Duke of Brabant,¹ and they therefore dictated their own terms. On February 21st Edward ordered a new seal embodying his new title to be struck, and the same day he turned to England to prepare for another invasion of France.

At home Edward found the nation ready to support the war but by no means enthusiastic. The trading interest was behind him since his alliance with Flanders had ensured a steady market for English wool, and Parliament made liberal grants of money in return for a confirmation of the charters. But even liberal supplies were not sufficient. Edward's debts were enormous, already his crown had been pawned to the Archbishop of Tièves, and a far greater sum than he possessed was needed for his coming expedition. On March 1st he issued commissions for the raising of a loan. The Italian bankers, the Bardi and the Peruzzi, were approached for an advance, Englishmen of wealth, among whom was the Hull merchant William de la Pole, lent considerable sums, and the City of London was asked for £20,000, but after much haggling it contributed only £5000 towards the King's expenses.² By June Edward was at Shotley, near Harwich, ready for a return to France, but there news reached him of the preparations of his adversary, and of the fleet which was ready to bar his return to Flanders. His chancellor, the Archbishop of Canterbury, protested against the foolhardiness of venturing to cross the seas with the meagre detachment of forty ships then assembled. The King was furious, and appealed to his admiral, Robert de Morley, and his second in command, only to receive a similar warning. Edward at once dismissed his chancellor in a rage, and declaring with passionate weakness that there was a conspiracy to prevent his crossing, announced his intention of sailing without these cowards who feared where no danger existed.³ How-

¹ *Foedera*, II. 1100. Nevertheless Derby returned to England with the King (*ibid.*, 115).

² Cal. of Letter Book F, 45-50

³ Avesbury, 311, is the only recorder of this incident, but Murimuth, 105, alludes to extra ships being ordered out for the "small escort the King had provided". Aker, 68, follows Murimuth.

ever, this petulance, so characteristic of a mind bent always on the gratification of the momentary whim, was compelled to give way to reason, and the expedition was delayed for a few days, while more ships were procured from the Cinque Ports and other sea-coast towns. These were readily supplied, since the frequent French descents had put all seamen of the south coast on the alert. On June 22nd at six o'clock in the morning the fleet of some 200 sail left the mouth of the Orwell. On the following day the French enemy was descried at anchor in the estuary of the River Scheldt, just where the little stream of the Zuwyn flowed in. Commanded by Quièret, Béhuchet, and the Genoese Barbavera, it was composed of ships partly drawn from French ports, partly procured from the Spaniards and from the Genoese, the most famous maritime mercenaries of the period. The English fleet was drawn mainly from the merchant craft of the English coast; some royal ships there may have been,¹ but many of these, notably the famous "Christopher," had been captured in one of the French descents upon the English coast, and now formed part of the enemy's resources². Some ships of Bayonne, which had been commandeered some six months earlier, were probably also present. Drawn though it was from so many sources, the fleet was organised to some extent, and was under the command of a duly appointed admiral. Three years earlier the King had shown signs of attempting to organise the navy by appointing admirals of the fleet to control shipping in the various districts of his kingdom, and even of his duchy of Aquitaine; he had also given orders for the impressment of as many men as were required for his fleet. Still the vessels that now lay off Sluys were mostly in essence trading vessels, though well adapted for war, since the merchant of the Middle Ages was prepared at all times to fight in defence of his property.

Edward did not give battle immediately, as he wished to choose his time so as to secure the full advantage of the elements. Excusing himself by pleading the sacredness of Friday, a well-worn excuse of the commander who wished for delay, he allowed night to fall without taking action. The morrow was to decide the command of the sea. In the past Edward had boldly claimed the lordship

¹ Edward I. had built some royal ships and Edward II. early in his reign possessed eleven vessels.

² Baker, 62; *Nangis Contin.*, ii. 161; Murimuth, 106.

of the English seas as part of the heritage of his ancestors:¹ could he make good the boast? Midsummer Day dawned upon the opposing forces to find them both eager for the conflict, both burning to avenge the losses of the unlicensed warfare of the past years, both perhaps realising that beneath everything else there lay the commercial rivalry of two growing nations. Still battle was not joined till past midday. The French commanders could not agree as to the best course to pursue. Barbavera was anxious to act on the offensive, but his colleagues were satisfied to move a mile farther into the open, where they lashed their ships together in three lines to await the English onslaught. The object of this manœuvre apparently was to compel the enemy to attack bows to bows, and to prevent their possibly superior numbers from surrounding the French ships and defeating them individually. But Edward had not waited so long to accept the dictation of the enemy. Seeing that the wind had changed in the night from the east to the west, or perhaps the north-west, he stood out to sea partly to secure its assistance, partly to have the sun at his back as he bore down on the enemy. This manœuvre was believed to betoken flight, but suddenly the English fleet swept round, and about three o'clock in the afternoon bore down upon the French with wind and sun behind. The wisdom of Barbavera's advice was now fully exemplified. Chained together, the Frenchmen could do nothing, and were only exposed to a raking fire from the English archers, whose long bows decimated their ranks, preparatory to the hand-to-hand fight which ensued when the rival ships came to close quarters. Edward had taken the enemy on the beam, for there had been no time for them to weigh anchor and to unlash their ships.² All three divisions were equally helpless. The first was attacked by the foremost English ships at the end of the line, and each ship was defeated separately. So helpless were the French, compelled to wait to be attacked in turn as the victorious English swept down the line, that a portion of the English fleet was content to leave the right wing to its ultimate fate, and attacking the second division at its left extremity, defeated it also in detail. As

¹ Rot. Scot., i. 442.

² Meisa, iii. 45, states that on seeing Edward's supposed retreat the French ships unashed and started in pursuit, but the accounts of most of the chroniclers goes to disprove this.

the day wore on the English victory was still more definitely assured by the arrival of Flemish supporters in large numbers. It was only nightfall that saved the third line from annihilation similar to that of its fellows. Under cover of the darkness the Genoese admiral managed to draw out some twenty or thirty ships from the ill-fated estuary, and to evade the pursuit begun on the following morning under the Fleming, John Crabbe, who, once in the pay of the Scots, had become one of Edward's trusted servants.¹ Nothing remained of the great fleet that had so proudly guarded the Scheldt save a few fugitive vessels. The French losses were enormous. Apart from those who had fallen in the fight, many had striven to escape from the chained vessels by means of boats, which had been swamped by overcrowding, and for days after bodies were washed up all along the coast of Flanders. Of a force of 35,000 which had opposed him, Edward estimated that only 5000 escaped.² But the English also had to pay dearly for their victory, having lost about 4000 men, including four knights, so that Edward thought it advisable to postpone disembarkation for a few days and to welcome his wife and James van Artevelde on board his ship when they came to congratulate him on his victory.

This dramatic victory has earned for Edward the reputation of being the first English King to realise the naval destinies of the English nation, but the navy was not yet born. It is true that in the first flush of his victory he struck the celebrated "Noble," the gold coin bearing the legend, "Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat," but neither this, nor the ship which appeared on the reverse side,³ shows any clear realisation of what the claim to lordship of the seas really meant. Sluys was little more than a land battle fought afloat. Neither Edward nor his immediate successors understood the influence which sea power was to have on the development of the nation. Moreover, the victory had little if any influence on the course of events. The prospects for the coming campaign were not very promising. To add to his inevitable difficulties, Edward divided his forces. Robert of Artois, who had followed the main body over after the battle of Sluys, was despatched

¹ Lanercost, 270, explains the reason for this change of sides

² Letter to his son in Delpit, Documents, 68.

³ Melsa, iii. 45. This was the first English gold coin which obtained successful currency. Previous attempts by Henry III. and Edward himself to introduce "gold pennies" and "florins" had failed.

to besiege St. Omer with 50,000 men, while a force double that number advanced under the King towards Tournai. This procedure was probably dictated by Robert's desire to re-establish himself in the county from which he had been driven, and his selfish intrigues divided the English forces at a critical moment and made both expeditions nugatory. Robert himself achieved nothing. He burnt the suburbs of St. Omer, but was compelled to offer battle to the Duke of Burgundy under its walls, where both sides claimed the victory, but the honours fell to the enemy, for under cover of night the invaders decamped and joined Edward before Tournai. Here the siege had already begun, and on the very day of the battle of St. Omer, Edward had challenged Philip to personal combat, offering as an alternative to abide by the issue of a fight between 100 chosen champions on each side, or failing this also, asking for a day to be appointed for a full engagement of the two armies under the walls of Tournai. Philip had established himself midway between Tournai and St. Omer to check the English advance. No false chivalry would induce him to throw away the advantage that his fabian tactics gave him, and put the safety of his kingdom on the issue of either a personal combat or a pitched battle.

The two armies continued to watch one another, neither daring to take the offensive. A few unimportant skirmishes were the solitary incidents of two months' campaigning. Finally, pressure was brought to bear on Edward by his allies the Dukes of Brabant and Guelders, the Count of Hainault and the Maigrave of Juliers, who found the campaign irksome, and to whom the French promised full restitution of all fortresses. Even the Flemings had begun secret negotiations with the enemy. Edward saw his coalition melting away. Though Tournai was at its last gasp, he must perforce agree to a truce signed on September 25th to last till the following midsummer. All parties were to be left in possession of what they held at the moment, and free communication was to be allowed between French and English territory. At the same time another truce was arranged between England and Scotland, Philip having promised to give no assistance to England's Scottish enemies.

Thus ended Edward's second inglorious campaign against France to the intense disgust of his English followers, who had hoped to make their fortunes for life out of the plunder of Tournai.¹ Their

¹ *French Chron. of London*, 82.

master was heavily in debt—not least among his creditors being James van Artevelde. His archers were clamouring for pay, but demands and entreaties could not extract supplies from England.¹ After two uncomfortable months at Ghent he was obliged to escape by stealth, and taking ship in spite of tempest landed in England on November 30th. Furious at the failure of all his plans, he accused his ministers of fraudulently stopping his supplies. In this charge he was supported to a certain extent by public opinion,² but when he began preparations for a renewal of hostilities in the summer, he found nation and clergy bitterly opposed to the collection of extra taxation. Nothing daunted he went on his way. Distraint of Knighthood was enforced, an expedient partly financial, partly military, the mal-tolt on wool was levied, bows and arrows were collected, engines of war were made, coast defences were strengthened, ships were procured from the towns of Gascony, and terms of alliance were offered to Genoa. But English finances were in a terrible state. Expenses were on the increase; money was needed to buy the fidelity of the Gascon nobles, debts were due to the Genoese, the Riccardi merchants and the allied princes in Germany, and moreover, extra sums had to be raised for the ransom of English nobles made prisoners during the war. Lack of funds hampered Edward's policy at every turn, he even had to confess his inability to pay the dower of his daughter Joan, the promised bride of Frederick of Austria. To add to his discomfiture, his allies were deserting him. The Emperor, moved either by a desire to be reconciled to the Holy See, or by money said to have come out of the French Exchequer, abandoned his former policy, and entered into close alliance with Philip. He revoked the grant of the imperial vicariate conferred in the past, basing his action on a desire for peace, and justifying it by the fact that his ally had made a truce in the previous year without consulting him. Edward was helpless, and the bitterness that he felt is easily traceable beneath the formal and courteous phraseology of his answer to the imperial letter.³ But the support of Louis of Bavaria was not likely to be any more advantageous to France than it had been to him. It was a moral rather than a material reverse for English policy. More serious

¹ Baker, 72, *French Chron. of London*, 82-83; Privy Seals, quoted in Déprez, *La Guerre de Cent Ans*, 55-57.

² *French Chron. of London*, 82-83.

³ Printed in Froissart (ed. Kervyn), xvii. 189-192.

perhaps was the weakening of the ties which bound the Flemish burghers to England. Here, too, French money had been used to outbid the penniless Edward. Already secret messages were passing between the men of Ghent and the French Court,¹ and by 1342 they were evidently only waiting to secure their own terms of reconciliation with France. Nevertheless, James van Artevelde clung to the English alliance, and looked on Edward as his main support against the machinations of the exiled Count of Flanders. In 1345 the English King thought it advisable to pay a flying visit to Sluys, for the purpose of interviewing the burgomasters of the chief Flemish towns, to whom he suggested his eldest son as Count. Despite, nay perhaps on account of, van Artevelde's enthusiastic support of the project, the answer of the burgomasters was evasive, and before long all hope of Flemish assistance was lost by a rising of the men of Ghent in which van Artevelde was slain.²

Long before this had happened Edward had found another means of harassing France. The policy of German alliance, begun by King John, revived by Edward I and continued by himself, was abandoned, and a new plan offered itself. In 1341 his cousin John Duke of Brittany died without issue, and two claimants to the succession arose—the one Joan, daughter of the late Duke's brother, Guy Count of Penthievre, and wife of Charles of Blois, son of Margaret of Valois, and therefore nephew of Philip VI., the other John of Montfort, half-brother of the late Duke, and therefore Edward's second cousin. Owing to his relationship with Charles of Blois, the French King very naturally supported Joan's claim to the Duchy of Brittany. Equally naturally Montfort appealed to Edward, who acknowledged his right to the Duchy by sanctioning his inheritance of the Earldom of Richmond, held by the late Duke. Meanwhile, Charles of Blois, with the assistance of a French army, had compelled Montfort to capitulate at Nantes, thus leaving his heroic wife, Joan of Flanders, to carry on the struggle. Shut up in the castle of Hennebont, and in desperate straits, she appealed to Edward III, who, reluctant to interfere actively in the struggle, did so only after long deliberation. He was not particular as to the rights of the case. If he acknowledged Montfort as rightful Duke of Brittany, then he must confess that his own claim to the French throne was based on a different law of succession, but this was easy,

¹ Le Bel, i. 192-193.

² Lescot, 58.

in so far as the Parlement de Paris had taken this line in giving judgment for Charles of Blois. The argument of law readily gave way to the argument of expediency or personal advantage in the fourteenth century, and the only doubt that could oppress Edward was whether interference in Brittany was likely to prove as useless as interference in Flanders. Would this venture be any more successful than the last?

Edward resolved to take the risk. Preparations for an expedition to Brittany in November, 1341, did not materialise, but early in 1342 orders were issued to Sir Walter Manny to take a small force across to support the cause of De Montfort. Edward talked of going to France in person, and it is evident that his avowed object was to renew the French war, for on April 14th he spoke of the intended expedition as undertaken "to recover our rights"¹. Yet when reinforcements started in August, they were commanded by the Earl of Northampton and Robert of Artois, the King remaining in England. Northampton found that English assistance in Brittany had not turned the tide. Manny had relieved Hennebont, but little else had been achieved. Nor was Northampton much more successful, though he won a hard-fought battle at Morlaix. At length in October Edward himself crossed to Brittany,² but the attempt to attack France from the north-west was quite as much a failure as the earlier campaigns from the north-east. The King sat down before the town of Vannes, and thence wrote a long letter to his son, then acting as regent in England, from which it is evident that he had accomplished nothing, and was still haunted by a fear that lack of funds would cripple his endeavours. "But ever, dear son"—he wrote—"it behoveth you to stir up our chancellor and our treasurer to send money unto us, for they know well our estate"³. Philip joined the French forces in person, but was again content to watch the enemy and make no attack. Both sides suffered severely from the inclement weather, and at last terms were arranged by the envoys of Clement VI, Benedict XII.'s successor, who had been striving to bring about a cessation of hostilities.⁴ Having agreed to a truce, which was to last for three years, dating from the following Michaelmas, Edward returned to England, landing at Weymouth on March 2nd, 1343⁵.

¹ *Foedera*, II. 1193.

² *Ibid.*, 12.

³ *Avesbury*, 340-342.

⁴ See his letter to Edward, dated December 12th, 1342 (*Foedera*, II. 1216).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1220.

CHAPTER X

CRECY, CALAIS, AND THE BLACK DEATH
(1343-1349)

IN 1343 Edward had been King in fact as well as in name for wellnigh thirteen years. Most of his time had been spent in warlike enterprises or preparations therefor, but all had failed. David was back in Scotland, generally recognised as King; three separate expeditions against France had all ended ignominiously and nothing seemed to foreshadow the glories of the future. The King's diplomacy had been a mixture of double dealing and unsubstantiated bluster, while feverish musters of men and collection of materials of war had alternated with tournaments and joustings. The most impartial observer must have concluded that England's monarch loved war for war's sake, and that his claim to the throne of France was a mere excuse to afford an outlet for his martial instincts, but all this was to be forgotten in the wonderful success of a single campaign.

Two years of fitful peace were sustained by negotiations as hopeless and as insincere as all similar endeavours in the past.¹ Finally in May, 1345, Edward found himself ready to renew the war. He had temporarily solved his financial problems by inducing the Parliament of 1344 to grant supplies for two years, and had even managed to get his crown out of pawn. All ships of thirty tons' burthen and over had been impressed, the admirals had been ordered to collect transports, hurdles and pontoons and other fittings for the shipping of horses had been gathered from Norfolk and Suffolk; every available soldier had been collected: levies came even from Ireland.² After informing the Pope that the constant infractions of the truce by the French had made peace impossible, Edward sent out two expeditions, the one

¹ *Foedera*, ii. 1235, 1239; iii. 18, 19.² *Ibid.*, iii. 10, 15, 16, 17.

to Brittany under the Earl of Northampton, the other to Aquitaine under Henry Earl of Derby, soon by his father's death to become Earl of Lancaster. But these were diversions. The King meanwhile busied himself in preparing his main army. He visited Flanders, perhaps with the intention of moving along his old route, but though he declared himself satisfied with the fidelity of the Flemings,¹ he abandoned this idea, if he ever had conceived it. But it was not till July, 1346, that with the Prince of Wales he set sail from Portsmouth, leaving his second son, the six-year-old Lionel, as nominal regent of the kingdom. There seems to be little doubt that Edward's intention was to land in Gascony in support of the Earl of Lancaster,² who was doing much to restore English prestige in Southern France. So successful had he been, that Philip thought it necessary to send a force under his son, the Duke of Normandy, against him. Perigord was already won by the English, Aiguillon, the main entrance to the Agenais, had just fallen, and the French troops were concentrating their attention on the recapture of this important place. Lancaster therefore, whose advance had thus been checked, was actually asking for reinforcements from England. Still the destination of the fleet was kept a profound secret, even after it had left Portsmouth and had anchored off the Isle of Wight, where it was detained by contrary winds. Seeing, perhaps, the finger of destiny in the wind which prevented his ships sailing down the Channel, possibly, too, moved by the arguments of Godfrey of Harcourt, an exiled baron of Normandy, who like Robert of Artois in the past looked on the English King as a means of recovering his patrimony, Edward changed his plans, and on July 12th appeared off St. Vaast de la Hogue on the eastern shore of the Côtentin.³ France was to be invaded from the North.

To strike a blow at Normandy was to a certain extent in harmony with the traditional strategy of the English in France, and

¹ *Foedera*, iii 55

² Bishop Burghersh in a letter written from La Hogue states that the original destination of the fleet was Gascony (Muirnuth, 200).

³ Muirnuth, 199, Letter of Bishop Burghersh, *ibid*, 200, Baker, 79; Froissart, iii 129-133, Anon. Chronicle printed in Moisant, *Prince Noir*, 157-158. The latter implies that Edward landed on the coast of Normandy because fate or the prevalent winds seemed to direct him thither.

would relieve the pressure on Lancaster in the South. Still it would have been wiser to land in Brittany and use that country, where the English had at least a foothold, as a base, instead of throwing an army without resources into a hostile province where defeat meant annihilation. The victory of Crécy, which was to crown the campaign, blinded men's eyes to the folly of this sudden decision. Had the battle turned in favour of the French, as well it might, what is now praised as the boldness which alone commands success would have been condemned as foolhardiness which had richly deserved defeat. The only advantage on Edward's side was the unexpectedness of the attack. Philip was not prepared to defend Normandy, and was compelled to summon his son from the siege of Aigillon to defend his duchy, thus giving Lancaster an opportunity of which he quickly availed himself. Before the year was out he had made a raid into the heart of Poitou and had stormed the town of Poictiers,¹ while the Flemings created another diversion by making an incursion into French territory in August.

Meanwhile, Edward, having devastated the country round La Hogue, burnt ships, and destroyed the town of Baifleur, began his march into the heart of Normandy on July 18th. He set out without forming any definite plan, save that his great desire was to provoke Philip into venturing the safety of his throne and kingdom in the open field. Little or no resistance met the invaders as they marched eastwards parallel with the coast. The bridges at Carentan and St. Lo had been broken down, but they were easily repaired, and without a single day's rest, as Edward boasted, the army reached Caen on the 26th. Here a small force under the Count of Eu and the Lord of Tancarville tried to hold a portion of the town, known as the Ile Saint Jean, which was surrounded by two branches of the River Orne. There was a stiff fight at the bridge which spanned the lesser stream, but the English archers having opened a way, the heavy armed horsemen drove the French from their defences. Meanwhile, the fleet had not been idle. The whole coast from Roche Massé and Cherbourg to Ouistreham at the mouth of the Orne had been pillaged and burnt; sixty-one large vessels of war, not counting lesser craft, had been destroyed, and much plunder

¹ Letter of Lancaster in Avesbury, 372-374; Le Bel, ii. 99-107; *Chronique Normande*, 285.

had been transferred to the ships.¹ At Caen a five days' halt was made, the interval being used to send the fleet home to England under the command of the Earl of Huntingdon, who had fallen sick. Leaving Caen on the last day of July, a week's march brought the English army to the banks of the Seine at Elbeuf, and into close proximity to Philip, who had mustered his forces a little way down the river at Rouen. The right bank was held by the French, who, however, refused to attack, and Edward, unwilling to engage at a disadvantage, turned to the right and marched up the stream towards Paris, devastating the country as he went. The French followed a parallel line, though Philip rushed back to Paris, presumably to put his capital in a state of defence. Edward's object was now to cross the Seine and make for Flanders, but all the bridges had been broken down, including that of Poissy, which he reached on August 13th. Here he determined to cross, but before the bridge could be repaired a force from Amiens, which tried to obstruct the work, had to be driven off. It was here that during an enforced halt of two days he received a challenge from his adversary, offering to meet him on a given day in the open field. Just as in the past Philip had refused such an offer, so now did Edward, and his taunt that his adversary, who declared himself so anxious to meet him, had nevertheless done all in his power to prevent an encounter by destroying the bridges, left the honours in wordy warfare distinctly on the English side.² Yet Edward was in desperate plight. His foolish ravaging of a country, of which he claimed to be King, enraged the inhabitants, and deprived the army of supplies. The only hope was to push on, and on August 16th, the day after he sent his reply to Philip's challenge, he led his men across the repaired bridge, and marched northwards at a quicker rate than he had hitherto attempted. Harassed by the inhabitants and pursued by the whole French army, Edward reached the Somme, only to find it apparently too deep to cross, and guarded on the other side by a detachment of the enemy. All seemed lost, when an Englishman, who had lived in those parts for sixteen years, was found to guide the army across Blanchetâque ford when the tide

¹ Letters written from Caen by the King (Froissart, ed Kervyn), xviii. 286-287; Lanercost, 242-243, and by Michael Northburgh in Avesbury, 358-360, and Bishop Burwash in Murimuth, 202-203.

² Hemingburgh, ii. 423-426.

had fallen.¹ The passage was not effected without a severe fight, in which many Frenchmen fell, the remainder fleeing in disorder to Abbeville. Philip arrived too late to harass the English rear while crossing the ford, and found them encamped on the other side on the borders of the forest of Crecy. Though Edward offered to allow a free passage over the river, and time to choose a site for battle, Philip marched up stream, crossing at Abbeville, where he lay that night.²

Edward, realising that he must now put everything to the venture of a battle, did not hasten on his march the following day, but only moved to the other side of the forest, nearer to the village of Crecy, where next morning he arrayed his men betimes in the usual three "battles". He himself took up a position in the rear with a reserve force, while the other two lines were drawn up facing the approach from Abbeville, the right wing under the Prince resting on the little River Maye, near the village of Crecy, the left under the Earls of Northampton and Arundel, extending to the neighbourhood of Wadicourt. Before them lay a gentle slope descending into the Vallée des Clercs, made difficult of access by pits dug in the ground, something after the style of the Scots at Bannockburn. The English formation was grounded on the experience of the past, the men-at-arms being dismounted and drawn up in line, with the archers on each flank thrown out at an angle towards the front; each of the two divisions was ready to receive the onslaught of the enemy in a deadly semicircle, as at Dupplin Moor. The French, having to come up from Abbeville, did not arrive till late in the afternoon, when the more prudent of Philip's advisers urged a postponement of the engagement till the following day, but the feudal soldier in France had not yet learnt his lesson, and imagining that a single charge would rout the small force which barred his passage,

¹ The story of the Englishman who pointed out the ford is told only by Melsa, iii 57, and there by a slip the word Seine is substituted for Somme, but as St Valery and Crotoy are mentioned as on either side of the crossing, it is obviously only a clerical error, one, however, which the editor of the chronicle has not noticed (see Introduction, p. xxxiii). The story is worthy of credence, as the English home of the guide is mentioned as Roeston, near Nafferton, a place where the Abbey of Meaux had estates.

² Probably August 24th, though Baker (254) seems to put it on August 25th Cf. *Itinerary* kept by Edward's cook and another contemporary one printed in Baker (notes), 252-255. Cf. pp. 255-257. For the route of both armies see *Gilles le Muisis* (Soc. de l'Hist. de France, 1905), 155-160.

was already bargaining which of the wealthy English combatants should fall to his share after the battle. The caution Philip had displayed in past campaigns was either thrown to the winds or borne down by insubordination. The Oriflamme was unfurled, and the attack began. Some idea of the undisciplined character of the French assault may be gathered from the fact that both chroniclers and eye-witnesses disagree as to the number of "battles" in which the French advanced, estimates varying from two to nine. Everything was against them. The sun shone in their faces, as six years earlier it had shone in the eyes of the French fleet at Sluys, they had to attack a position wisely chosen and carefully defended, their superior numbers¹ were even a disadvantage, for in the narrow space encompassed by the wings on either side of the two English lines there was no room for the thousands who desired to press on to the attack. The first line of some six thousand Genoese cross-bowmen tried to prepare the way for a cavalry charge, but the superior range and rate of fire of the English archers rendered them useless. The feudal horsemen, who had watched this preliminary encounter with undisguised contempt, now charged down over their mercenaries, and dashed up against the two English lines. They had delivered themselves into the enemy's hands. So soon as they reached the bottom of the hill they came within range of the English archers, and as they drew nearer the rain of arrows also took them on the flank, so that heaps of dead and dying lay all along the slope. As each fresh body of knights came up, it dashed on in the rear of its predecessors, never waiting till the way was clear. Fifteen or sixteen times did the French charge, but valour was of no avail against the cloud of arrows. Only once did they reach the English lines, when for a moment it seemed as though the right wing might be driven back, and in the hand-to-hand struggle the Prince was

¹ The English army consisted of about 2,400 lances, and if we add to this the *armatae* and *hobelarii*, light and heavy cavalry, totalled 4,000 men-at-arms. The archers approached the round figure of 10,000. See Staffordshire Historical Collections, vol xviii., "Crecy and Calais," by Major-General the Hon. George Wrottesley. Cf. *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xiv. 767. A contemporary list in *Brut*, 538-541, makes the huge total of 25,280 exclusive of 314 sappers and gunners. The most modest estimate of the French men-at-arms is 12,000, given by Winkeley, an eye-witness of the battle, in a letter home, in Murmuth, 216. The communal levies and other foot-soldiers must also have been very numerous, though with the exception of the 6000 Genoese, these took little part in the battle.

brought to his knees. But timely relief sent by the King from the rear averted this possibility. It had been nigh on vespers when the fight began, night closed down on a stricken field. Dead lay in heaps in front of the English line, where Frenchmen had failed to pass the zone of fire or had fallen in the short struggle with the men-at-arms. Amongst these was John, King of Bohemia, that typical knight-errant of the school of arms which had been just defeated, and Louis, Count of Flanders, whose fidelity to his over-lord had cost him first his principality and now his life. Though in possession of the field of battle, the English had not driven all the French into retreat. When morning broke they were again attacked by detachments, which had not been engaged on the previous day, but assisted, by a heavy fog, after some hard fighting they were again victorious.

The battle of Crecy marks no new steps in English tactics. It is but the logical development of a movement begun in the reign of Edward I. The combination of the two kinds of weapons, the lance of the man-at-arms and the arrow of the archer, the dismounting of the heavy armed cavalry, the defence of the line by pits—all have been seen before. Warwick in the Welsh wars and Edward at Falkirk had begun the combination of the two arms, men-at-arms had fought on foot at Boroughbridge, probably at Dupplin Moor, certainly at Halidon Hill; the pits in front of the line had been used by the Scots at Bannockburn, and quite recently by Northampton at Morlaix in Brittany.¹ True, some have thought that the reported use of three cannon marks a new departure, but artillery was still in its infancy. For many a long year its use was to be confined to siege operations, and the cannon of the English must have been negligible in deciding the fate of the battle, for their only reported success was the startling of the Genoese bowmen and the terrifying of a few French horses.² The success of the new tactics, however, was not entirely due to the military genius of those who developed their use. At Crecy, as in earlier cases, the folly of the enemy had

¹ Knighton, ii. 25.

² Froissart, iii. 416, Giovanni Villani, lib. xii. cap. 66 (vol. viii. p. 163). "Instrumenta de Laton vocata Gonnes" were already in use in England, and six such had been stored at the Guildhall in London in 1339 for the defence of the City. These were not heavy ordnance, but hand guns with stocks on which to rest the muzzle (Calendar of Letter Book F., p. 1, *Memorials of London*, 205).

contributed largely to their defeat. The French made no attempt to profit by greatly superior numbers by wheeling round on the English flank, which on the Wadicourt side cannot have been strongly protected. A force without discipline, wearied with purposeless marching, had attacked men who had been quietly resting at their posts all day ; mere weight of numbers was its only chance, and that was swept away by the superiority of the English missile weapon.

From Crecy the victorious army made straight for Calais, the great port of the Dover Straits, before which it sat down on September 4th. As the fortifications were too strong to be taken by assault or destroyed by the cumbersome siege engines of the period, Edward prepared to blockade both town and harbour, despite his reduced and somewhat mutinous army, which was showing signs of homesickness.¹ Reinforcements, food, bows, and other necessaries for the siege were sent from England, and a fleet was provided for their safe escort. The Queen, too, realising that Edward's return was indefinitely postponed by the arduous task he had set himself, prepared to join him before the beleaguered city.² The siege of Calais was only less venturesome than the campaign which preceded it. Danger threatened the English King on all sides. The Irish were contemplating a rising, and Philip, besides mustering an army at Compiègne, had already sent urgent letters to David of Scotland begging him to make a diversion by invading England.³ This last expedient was no new phase of the Franco-Scottish alliance, for in 1340 the Scots had been urged by the French King to cross the border, and they had harried the March districts.⁴ Now the young Scottish King was back in Scotland, quite ready to avenge in person the interference of English Kings in the policy of the northern kingdom. With a large army and mercenaries sent from France, and in the hope that all the fighting forces of England were overseas, he advanced towards the Border early in October to receive a check at the Castle of Liddel, held for its owner, Thomas Lord Wake, by Walter Selby, a valiant soldier who paid for his resistance with his life. Having captured this outpost, the Scots advanced towards Durham, laying waste the country as they went. The English had

¹ Deserters were increasing in numbers (*Cal. of Letter Book E.*, 154).

² *Foedera*, II. 90.

³ *Hemingsburgh*, II. 422-423.

⁴ *Knighton*, II. 16 17; *Baker*, 69-70.

for some time expected the attack, which had been delayed by dissensions in the Scottish camp.¹ As early as August 20th men had been mustered at York and other places in view of probable invasion, and an army had been collected by such northern lords as were not serving abroad, including the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of Carlisle, Ralph Lord Neville of Raby, and Henry Lord Percy.² These met the invaders at Neville's Cross, near Durham. On both sides the men-at-arms were drawn up in three lines, with the archers on the wings in the now approved fashion. There was some delay in opening the attack, both Scots and English conscious perhaps that the new tactics were more suitable for defensive than for offensive action. At length a small body of English archers advanced, and began to harass the enemy with a shower of arrows. Stung to action, the Scots abandoned their position and dashed down upon the English lines. The shock of the charge shook the English formation, which wavered but did not break, and the invaders, spent with their charge, hampered too by desertion from the ranks, broke and fled.³ Their loss was very heavy, and the flower of their chivalry, including the young King, fell into the enemy's hands. Promptly the war was taken across the Border. Balliol was once more forced upon unwilling subjects, and his English army, reinforced by volunteers drawn even from the ranks of the clergy, who looked on the war as a righteous revenge for the miseries they had suffered, plundered the Lowlands and bore off live stock and all moveable property.

The battle of Neville's Cross was fought on October 17th. Three days later the Regent directed letters of thanks to the Archbishop of York and other leaders for the share they had taken in thus repulsing the Scots.⁴ To Edward at Calais the news must have been very gratifying, more especially as earlier in the same month Lancaster had crowned his brilliant raid into the heart of Poitou by the capture of Poictiers. English arms were victorious on all sides, the culminating achievement must be the reduction of

¹ *Munmuth*, 202.

² The retinues of the lay lords numbered 480 men-at-arms and 2880 archers (*Foedera*, iii. 113). This is only a portion of the army, but Thomas Sampson's contemporary estimate of 32,000 men (*Letter in Froissart* (ed. Kervyn), v. 489 492) is impossible.

³ *Melsa*, iii. 61-62.

⁴ *Foedera*, iii. 92.

Calais. The English soldiers before that town were housed in improvised huts, protected against a relieving force by a marsh on one side, by the sea on the other, and by a wall joining these two natural defences.¹ At first the blockade was not complete, and supplies were introduced by sea. With that resource which made him one of the ablest commanders of his day, Northampton had a palisade constructed, which reached from the shore into deep water, and this together with some engines placed near to the entrance of the harbour, effectually shut out all hope of effective relief. Meanwhile, reinforcements and provisions were being constantly summoned from England, and an extra fleet of 120 sail was assembled. Edward's army had been much diminished during the early days of the siege, but now he had a numerous and well-equipped force at his disposal,² and could defy all attack both by sea and land. Within the city the state of affairs became daily more serious. Hopes ran high on June 25th, when a determined effort was made to force the entrance into the harbour by a large flotilla, but again the project miscarried. Meanwhile, though dysentery had appeared in the English camp, enthusiasm was kept up by the news that Sir Thomas Dagworth, who had succeeded Northampton as commander in Brittany, had utterly defeated Charles of Blois outside Rochederien, and had taken him prisoner.³

The Englishmen's star was in the ascendant: the only question was whether Philip would seriously attempt to relieve his beleaguered city by force of arms. By July 17th he had mustered his forces at Hesdin,⁴ some fourteen miles north-east of Calais, and ten days later was encamped on rising ground close to the marsh which protected the English position. Instead of the expected attack, there came the two Cardinals to the English lines suggesting terms of peace, but negotiations fell through, as the English refused to allow the surrender of Calais to be discussed. The French then proposed a battle on some site chosen by both parties, to which Edward agreed, but before the arrangements were completed Philip broke

¹ Melsa, iii. 63; Le Bel, ii. 95.

² See lists varying in detail in *Hakluyt's Principal Navigations* (Glasgow, 1905), i. 297-299, Staffordshire Collections, xvii. 204; Royal Households (Soc. of Antiquaries, 1790), 3-9.

³ Letter to Edward in Avesbury, 383-389.

⁴ Cal. of Letter Book F, 165-166.

up his camp and left his tents and a large portion of his baggage in flames.¹ The unfortunate inhabitants of Calais, who had been signalling to their friends for immediate succour, for they had been reduced to feeding on cats and dogs, now saw their case was hopeless. On August 4th they surrendered the town to the English King. The burghers were treated kindly, but were told plainly that they must evacuate the town with the exception of twenty-two wealthy burghers, retained possibly to assist the new inhabitants with their advice.² Henceforth Calais was to be an English city, and proclamation was made in London and throughout England inviting colonists to take up their residence there.

Thoroughly disheartened, the French King on September 28th signed a truce, and Edward, having issued regulations for the government of his newly won city, and having appointed a captain and marshal to hold it, crossed to England, landing at Sandwich on October 12th. The great campaign was over, Edward had reaped much glory, and Europe was astounded at the victory of Crecy. The most tangible advantage gained by England was the possession of Calais, which from Edward's point of view, and that of many later kings, was an excellent door of entry into France, but which from the nation's standpoint had a utility far beyond any mere military consideration. It gave England the command of the narrow seas, and thereby protected English shipping to such an extent, that a century later it was to be prized by Englishmen as the key to their trade and the assurance of their commercial security.

With Crecy and Calais to his credit Edward had reached the pinnacle of his fame. He had drawn the eyes of all Europe on himself, and had even struck the imagination of the princes of the Empire so far as to be approached by the electors of Mainz, Brandenburg, and the Palatinate, with a view to standing as a candidate for the vacant imperial throne. He became intoxicated with success, his friends and courtiers abetted him in his extravagances, and his recent victories were celebrated in dancing, feasting, and all kinds of revels. "Much pleasure did they have"—writes the poetic chronicler

¹ Letter from Edward, Avesbury, 391-393; Le Bel, ii. 127-132; *Chronique Normande*, 89-90, Knighton, ii. 49-52. *Nangis Contin.*, ii. 206, declares that Edward suggested the parley, during which he so fortified his position as to make it impregnable.

² *Li Muisis*, 274; Froissart, iv. 64-65; Avesbury, 396.

—“there were to be seen many deeds of love and nobleness, of plesantly and of prowess”¹ The rich revelled in the plunder of France. “A new sun seemed to have risen in England,”² we are told. Nevertheless, a dark cloud was ere long to break over the realm. Already the trade routes which led from China were beginning to bring westwards that terrible disease, which later ages learnt to call the Black Death. Early in 1348 it reached the shores of Italy, Spain, and Southern France. To the north-east it crossed the Alpine passes into Bavaria in the latter part of the same year, and it also travelled down the Rhine. In July Normandy was infected, and in August the Bishop of Bath and Wells was ordering processions and Stations every Friday to pray God to avert the scourge, but before that month had passed the plague had crossed into Britain and attacked Melcombe Regis in Dorsetshire.³

Epidemic sickness was no new thing in fourteenth-century England. The famine of 1315-1316 had been followed by pestilence, and in 1341 there had been many deaths, particularly in Leicestershire, from a mysterious disease which showed itself in paroxysms or fits, attended by terrible internal pains.⁴ But the Black Death was a totally different sickness. It was a kind of bubo-plague, and assumed a twofold character. In some cases very hard and dry swellings appeared suddenly on the body of a seemingly quite healthy person. From this form of the disease recovery was possible, but a more malignant type was characterised by “small black pustules,” and also, it would seem, by the spitting of blood, and this generally ended fatally. Death came with a celerity which was merciful to the victims, but most terrifying to the survivors; some lived only a few hours after the fatal plague spots had shown themselves, others lingered for three or more days.⁵ The mortality was greatest among the poor and among the clergy, who probably caught the infection by ministering to the sick. The infirm and aged were largely immune, the young and strong were those particularly marked out for destruction.⁶ From Dorsetshire the awful

¹ *Chandos Herald*, 31.

² *Walsingham*, i. 272.

³ The earliest date given is “about July 7th” (*Eulogium Hist.*, iii. 213), the latest “the autumn” (Knighton, ii. 59).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

⁵ Baker, 99-100, Knighton, ii. 61, Avesbury, 406. *Annals of Ireland*, by Friar John Clyn (Irish Arch. Soc., 1849), 36.

⁶ Baker, 99.

disease spread steadily over the whole country. Westwards it swept into Devon, northwards to Bristol, and thence by way of Oxfordshire to London, where it arrived in October. From then till the following August it raged in the capital. Meanwhile, Norwich, Yarmouth, Cambridge, and the Eastern counties had been devastated, and by the beginning of 1349 York was infected¹. From Northern England the disease travelled to Scotland, but in its worst form did not show itself there till 1350². Wales was devastated in 1350, Ireland suffered most probably in the preceding year.

By degrees the Black Death spent itself, it can hardly have ceased from any other cause. The science of sanitation was in its infancy, and where men congregated disease found much encouragement. The connection between cleanliness and health was faintly understood, but even in London, when Edward the Second's widow came to be buried in the Grey Friars in 1358, it was found necessary to cleanse the streets of Bishopsgate and Aldgate, before the cortège could pass along them with decency. "Rakyers" were appointed by the City to remove refuse, and carts were kept for this purpose; strict injunctions were issued against polluting the Thames, most necessary as the river water was used to supplement the none too plentiful supply provided by the public conduits,³ but the very frequency of such commands presupposes a neglect to obey them. Quite apart from such insanitary conditions, there was little likelihood of checking an epidemic, owing to the lack of medical knowledge. Even in those far-off days there were those who declared that careful dieting was better than any doctor's prescription "for morthereres aren mony leches"⁴. Though it was quite necessary for a doctor to be licensed before practising, and in London to be enrolled as a master surgeon, many quack doctors existed, and braved the severe penalties of detection. Even the regular practitioners had strange methods, and John of Gaddesden, court physician to Edward II, and cited amongst learned doctors by Chaucer, had the wildest ideas as to desirable medicines, though in some ways he showed a knowledge of cures only rediscovered in quite recent days. If on the one

¹ *Northern Registers*, 399-400.

² Baker, 100, Fordun, 368-369, Wyntoun, vi. 197.

³ *Memorials of London*, 223, 279

⁴ *Vision of Piers Plowman*, Text B., Passus, vi., ll. 270-276.

hand he set out to cure the stone by a mixture of beetles, the heads and wings of crickets, and oil, he at the same time understood that a red light was the best antidote for the marks of smallpox, and when Edward II's son was suffering from that disease, hung the bedroom with red cloth, a proceeding for which he has been held up to much undeserved ridicule.¹ So far as the Black Death was concerned, the lancing of the swellings is the only remedy of which we hear²

Small wonder then that the tale of deaths in 1348-1349 was large. The sickness must have been far more deadly than any previous plague, since the chroniclers give it so much attention, but it is impossible to accept quite literally the 1480 deaths in three parishes at Leicester, or the 200 buried in one day in the pit by Smithfield. The proportion of deaths is variously given from nine-tenths to one-fifth of the population, though the latter estimate is probably a clerical error, since it is preceded by a description of how certain districts were entirely depopulated.³ An examination of the presentations to vacant benefices and the enrolment of wills in the plague year seem to show that half the population may have been swept away, that is to say, some two and a half million out of a total of five million.⁴ The statements of the chroniclers as to the devastation of the plague, how men fled from the infection from place to place only to succumb in the end, how whole villages were depopulated, and how the living could not keep pace with the burial of the dead, might be considered exaggerated if we had not other indications that the rate of mortality was enormous. At Westminster the Abbot and twenty-six monks,⁵ at St. Albans more

¹ Rosa Anglica practica medicina (Venice, 1502), ff. 41^{vo}, 97-97^{vo}. Cf. Jusserand, *Wayfaring Life*, 180-181. For the treatment of smallpox by the exclusion of the chemical rays of daylight see *The British Medical Journal*, August 6th, 1910, No. 2588, pp. 310-311, and references there given.

² Baker, 100.

³ *Brut*, 303, Walsingham, i 273, *Eulogium Hist.*, iii 213.

⁴ A controversy on this subject will be found in the *Fortnightly Review*, vols. ii. iii., iv. The estimate here given is that of Dr Seeböhm. Professor Thorold Rogers held that the population before the Black Death was not more than two to two and a half millions. Cf. Creighton, *Epidemics*, i 122-141, and especially Gasquet, *Great Pestilence*, *passim*, for much valuable material on this question. The various views are discussed in Cunningham, *Industry and Commerce*, i 328-331.

⁵ *The History of Westminster*, by John Flete (15th cent.), (Cambridge, 1909), 128.

than forty monks died,¹ at Colchester over a hundred wills were enrolled in the plague year, whereas the usual number was six,² and in London the number of wills proved increased proportionately. Eight years after the pestilence had ceased the Londoners declared that their city still felt its effects, and that one-third of it was still uninhabited.³ The land had become infected, and several recurrences of the plague occurred before the end of the reign. In 1361-1362 there was one known as the "pestis secunda" or "pestis puerorum," which seems to imply that it generally attacked the children, though grown men also succumbed, including the gallant Earl of Lancaster. It reappeared in 1356, 1368-1369, in 1375 and in 1381, but on no occasion did it reach the proportions of the first attack.

The moral effect of such successive visitations cannot be overestimated. The suddenness of the attack, the seeming inevitability of the disease, its mysterious and novel nature, all reacted forcibly on the survivors. To some it might appear as a warning and a presage of the end of the world. From Flanders the Flagellants came to London, and marched in procession through the streets, flogging each other's bare backs as they went, but in England this does not seem to have been regarded as anything more than a manifestation of religious madness.⁴ From this time onwards a spirit of reckless bravado seemed to spread through the nation, a neglect of authority, a feeling that life was beginning all over again, with a new-found liberty that trembled on the verge of license. The author of the *Vision of Piers Plowman* in particular writes of the decay of morals and religion "sithen the pestilence" as affecting all classes.⁵ It was also a time of religious deadness. Some, it is true, were ready to endow new religious houses. On the site of the plague pit near Smithfield, where so many Londoners had been buried, there arose a Carthusian monastery, thanks to the generosity of Bishop Northburgh and Sir Walter Manny; William de la Pole endowed St Michael's Monastery at Hull.⁶ But despite the observance of forms and ceremonies, the real spirit of the nation was profoundly sceptical. There were many besides Chaucer's doctor of physic

¹ *Chron. Angliae*, 27.

² Oak Book of Colchester (ed. W. G. Benham, 1909).

³ Cal. of Letter Book G., 85

⁴ Avesbury, 407-408. ⁵ Text B, Passus, ix, ll. 154-181. ⁶ Melsa, iii 48.

whose "studie was but litel on the Bible". Pilgrimages had become more excuses for a holiday than religious undertakings, funerals were opportunities for feasting, rioting, and indecent games; wrestling, dancing, and amusements of a still more doubtful order frequently took place in churchyards and even in the churches themselves.¹ The Black Death in fact is the central point of a great transition in England. It came when the mysticism of the Middle Ages was already passing away, and men were becoming more materialistic in their outlook. Under other circumstances the tendency might have been, as indeed it was in some parts of Europe, to fly to the consolations of religion, but the feeling of national pride, born of recent victories in France, the increase in material resources, which was beginning to be apparent, the new realm of conquest and of commerce which seemed opening out before the country, all tended in the opposite direction. Great, indeed, as was the effect of the pestilence on the political and economic life of the nation, deep down beneath all this lay the spiritual change which more than anything else shattered the foundations of mediæval society.

¹ See e.g. *Registrum R. Baldock* (Canterbury and York Soc., 1910), Part 1, 73-74.

CHAPTER XI

POICTIERS AND BRÉTIGNY
(1350-1360)

IT seemed as though the Black Death might offer an opportunity of a settlement between France and England. The Pope urged that, since the plague was evidently caused by Divine wrath at the sins of warring peoples, a cessation of hostilities could alone avert further destruction, and at first it seemed as if the appeal had not fallen on deaf ears.¹ The Earl of Lancaster, the Bishop of Norwich, and other plenipotentiaries travelled to Calais, and carried on negotiations with representatives of the French King between that town and Guînes, and as a result the truce was prolonged till September, 1349, and later to Whitsuntide, 1350. Englishmen were already tiring of the war. Asked in 1348 for advice on the subject, the Commons disclaimed responsibility for a decision, referring the King to the wise men of his Council,² an answer dictated by apathy if not direct hostility. Men were beginning to find that parliamentary grants were not sufficient to equip armies. Already in 1347, 20,000 sacks of wool had been commandeered for royal purposes on the pretext of a loan, and English merchants had been summoned to London and compelled to pay to the King as much as they could possibly afford.³ Despite the spoils of France, Edward was at his wits' end for money. Small wonder then that the two Parliaments which met in 1348 were restive, and detailed the grievances of the country in plain if respectful terms. Trade had been hampered by the imposition of taxes and by the extortion of the royal officials, imposts had been levied illegally, the country

¹ Knighton, ii. 60.

² Rot. Parl., ii. 165.

³ Foedera, iii. 116, 122, 131; Lords' Rep., iv. 565, Knighton, ii. 52-53.

was disturbed owing to a lack of governance¹. Though it is not so stated, the complaint of the Commons was obviously levelled against the war, since royal extortion was necessitated by the expenses of martial equipment, and disorder at home could be traced to the preoccupation of the Government in foreign affairs. If such was the feeling in England before the Black Death, it was intensified after that disaster. Both England and France needed a period of recuperation, and yet, though truces were made, war still went on, for death could not assuage the strife of kings.

Throughout the year 1348 independent captains, with little if any legitimate authority for their actions, won glory and gain at the expense of the unfortunate inhabitants of Gascony, Poitou, Saintonge, and the Limousin. Soon, however, men of greater position and responsibility began to move on both sides, and before long were planning treacherous assaults and other infractions of the truce. In 1349 the Earl of Lancaster led a raid from Gascony into Toulouse, but perhaps the most barefaced action of all was the attempt of Geoffrey de Charny, the French captain of St. Omer, to recapture Calais by stealth. He made overtures to Amerigo de Pavia, an Italian mercenary placed by Edward in command of the royal galleys at Calais, who in return for 20,000 gold crowns agreed to betray the citadel, and admit a band of Frenchmen within the fortifications. The wily mercenary betrayed the agreement to Edward, who himself came to Calais with his son and a detachment of soldiers. On the appointed night De Charny appeared at a postern, where Amerigo received him, and made sure of the balance of the 20,000 crowns which was then paid over to him. A detachment of French was then admitted into the courtyard of the castle, only to find itself made prisoner. When day dawned the English marched out to attack the astonished enemy, who had been keeping their vigil outside, confident that they were soon to be allowed to enter the town. In the fight that ensued both Edward and his son took part, the former disguised as a simple knight, and after a fierce encounter the French were surrounded and captured, their retreat being cut off by a body of archers who had been sent round to secure the bridge at Nieulay. It was on January 1st, 1350, that this attempt on Calais was frustrated, and to show his magnanimity and to live up to the principles of the

¹ Rot. Parl., II. 165-174, 201-204.

Order of the Garter he had just founded, Edward spread a great feast in the evening, at which the victors waited on their captives and did honour to them for their bravery¹

Before the end of the year Edward's great rival Philip VI. died, with his last breath bidding his son John defend his inheritance against the attacks of the English King. Again the Pope urged peace, but so long as Edward refused to concede the title of King of France this seemed impossible. Nevertheless, negotiations were entered into once more, while the war continued its course quite undisturbed, generally in favour of the English. In Brittany, Sir Thomas Dagworth had been carrying on a long struggle against the French with some success, but in 1350 he was slain.² After his death the war continued, but it was more noticeable for acts of chivalry than for serious fighting. Thus in 1351 thirty knights of each side fought a deadly combat in approved chivalric fashion, for were they not all Rolands and Olivers as Froissart admiringly declares?³ Meanwhile, in Gascony border warfare was in progress, in the spring of 1351 a fierce battle at Saintes resulted in an Anglo-Gascon victory, though this did not avert the recapture of St. Jean d'Angely later in the year. In the North, Calais had been used as a centre of minor operations, and the utility of this base was amply proved. Early in 1352, despite a renewal of the truce, the town and Castle of Guînes was added to the English possessions in Northern France. The hero of this exploit was a certain John of Doncaster, who was said to have acquired a knowledge of the castle during imprisonment there. Having seized both castle and town one dark night as a personal venture, he announced himself willing to sell the castle to the highest bidder, who not unnaturally turned out to be the English King.⁴ Nothing could better illustrate the true nature of this unauthorised warfare, and the "chivalry" which was ready to take advantage of such obvious subterfuge to evade a truce. Neither side can claim a clean sheet in this respect, the only distinction being that throughout these years of so-called

¹ Le Bel, II 147-151, Froissart, iv. 70-84, 303-317; Baker, 103-107, Avesbury, 408-410; *Chandos Herald*, 27-29, *Chron Normande*, 91-92, *Li Muisis*, 383-385.

² Avesbury, 411, Baker, 101-102.

³ The "Battle of the Thirty" was celebrated in a poem entitled "La Bataille de XXX Anglais et de XXX Bretons" (ed. Crapelet, 1835)

⁴ Baker, 116-118, Avesbury, 414-415, *Brut*, 302-303, Froissart, iv. 125-126, 347-348; *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 5-6.

peace the English played the game of treachery with greater success than their opponents.

In spite of isolated English successes, Edward could not claim to be much nearer his goal. Therefore by the beginning of 1354 he showed a real desire for a permanent peace by suggesting a settlement of all disputes on the basis of resigning his claim to the French throne and in return receiving the full sovereignty of the territories that he now held. The Commons when asked directly whether they were willing to accept a permanent settlement, cried out, "Yea! Yea!" in unanimous chorus.¹ Englishmen from the King downwards seem to have been quite honest in their attempts to reach an agreement, but the avowed object of the French Kings was to be masters in their own realm, and this was impossible so long as a rival sovereign held Gascony in the South, and Calais, Guînes, and Ponthieu in the North. Both parties agreed to accept the mediation of the new Pope, Innocent VI., but when the English plenipotentiaries arrived at Avignon about September, though they, and most particularly their leader, the newly promoted Duke of Lancaster, were treated with great respect, they discovered that the French would yield nothing in full sovereignty. The negotiations therefore fell through, leaving Edward in a strong position. Whatever motives had induced him to enter on the negotiations, he had maintained a consistent policy throughout their duration. He had offered a basis of conciliation, which the French repudiated. He was able to declare that his enemy had played fast and loose with his well-intentioned desire for peace, and accordingly he gave a very curt answer to fresh Papal envoys, whom he received at Embertide at a great Council at Westminster. In a circular letter to the English prelates he set forth his grievances,² thus appealing to the nation, which was already showing signs of restiveness at Papal interference, and could not but think that a French Pope, resident in a French town, was playing the game of his French patron. Edward determined to renew his old system of invasion. The time seemed opportune, for he saw a chance of gaining an entry into France with the assistance of a malcontent party among its nobles. The leader of this opposition was Charles King of Navarre, who represented the senior branch of the royal house of France, though through

¹ Rot. Parl., II. 262.

² Foedera, III. 303.

the female line. Ambitious and unscrupulous, he murdered King John's favourite, the Constable Charles of Spain, protecting himself from royal vengeance by negotiating an alliance with Edward III.¹ Though Charles the Bad, as he was coming to be called, was offered pardon, he did not trust the magnanimity of the French King, and fled incognito to his kingdom of Navarre, passing through Avignon, where he met the Duke of Lancaster and discussed terms of alliance.²

England therefore might hope for considerable assistance in the coming campaign. Though Charles was another rival for the French throne, one too with a similar and senior claim to Edward's, they united, temporarily at any rate, against the common enemy. An English expedition was prepared for an invasion of Northern France, with the idea of entering the Navarrese possessions in Normandy, which extended almost up to the walls of Paris. While men and ships were called out to accompany the Prince of Wales into Aquitaine, the King himself and the Duke of Lancaster sailed from the Thames on July 10th with the intention of making the Channel Islands, where they were to enter into communication with Charles the Bad. Contrary winds drove them into Portsmouth, when they got news that their supposed ally had come to terms with the French King : so abandoning their former project they sailed to Calais. Reinforced here by troops from Germany and Flanders, Edward set out on November 2nd on a raid into France in the hope of making a diversion for his son, who simultaneously began an attack from the South. He burnt and harried as he went, and strove to get into touch with the enemy, so that he might fight another Crécy, but the French retreated laying waste the country. Very soon provisions began to run short. Edward therefore turned back to Calais, whence he was at once called by serious news from Scotland.³ Again he had accomplished nothing save the destruction of crops and homesteads.

Meanwhile, the French King had been playing with more success the game which had been started against himself. If Edward could

¹ *Foedera*, iii. 271. Cf. Delachenal, "Premières négociations de Charles le Nauvais avec les Anglais" in *Bib. de l'Ecole de Chartres*, lx. 253-271.

² *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 13-14, Rot. Parl., ii. 264.

³ Official account laid before Parliament (Rot. Parl., ii. 264). Cf. Avesbury, 425-429; Baker, 125-126; Le Bel, ii. 180-183, *Nangis Contin.*

negotiate with Charles of Navarre, John could ally with the Scots. The spirit of the northern nation had already been roused by negotiations between the two countries, which had taken place since then King had been captured at Neville's Cross. In 1351 and again in 1353 Edward had attempted to induce David's subjects to ransom him by a payment of money and an acknowledgment of English suzerainty; on the former occasion the Scottish King had been sent to use his personal influence with his subjects, on the latter the Earl of Northampton had tried persuasion by means of an armed force. But all was of no avail. "That proud race of the Scots," as the chronicler calls them, would gladly ransom their King with gold; to own the overlordship of Edward they stoutly refused.¹ To foster this laudable spirit John promptly sent emissaries to urge an invasion of England, and with them a few French knights and a welcome supply of French gold. Almost as soon as Edward had sailed for France, the Scots were over the Border, plundering the district round Norham, and in November they surprised and captured Berwick. Such was the news that greeted Edward's ears on his return to Calais, and at the same time he learnt that the Irish had invaded the English Pale with Scottish assistance, but had been driven off.² Crossing at once to England, he called Parliament to grant money for the removal of this latest danger. By January 4th Edward had reduced Berwick, and he then led his army northwards. At Roxburgh he was joined by Edward Balliol, who solemnly surrendered his kingdom to his overlord.³ Edward now assumed the title of King of Scotland, and proceeded to punish his rebellious subjects, as he now regarded them. But though he had the banner of Scotland borne beside that of England at the head of his army, it was useless to pretend that the pensioned Edward Balliol had really been able to convey the Scottish throne. The Scots drove off their cattle, and retired to their woods and fastnesses, harassing the army when it straggled, but never offering to fight in the open field. With impotent rage Edward ravaged the country, not even sparing religious houses. A man of unrestrained passions, he allowed himself to be carried away by the feelings of the moment, and never

¹ Knighton, ii. 69, 75, Baker, 123, Foedera, iii. 231.

² Scalacronica (Leland's abstract), 304; Fordun, 371-372; Wyntoun, ii. 485-487; Knighton, ii. 81, 84; Avesbury, 431.

³ Rot. Scot., ii. 787-789.

realised that his own army would need all the sustenance which the enemy left behind in their hurried flight. The dispersal of his victualling fleet in a storm compelled him to retreat from Edinburgh. Once more the Scots had revenged themselves. The interference of Edward I. had again borne fruit. A tenacious enemy encamped in the rear was ever ready to spoil the best-laid plans for the English conquest of France.

While Edward was coping with the Scottish attack, his son had been carrying on active campaigning in France. He had left Plymouth as soon as the contrary winds, which kept his father in Portsmouth, had abated. On the 8th or 9th September he set sail, and reached Bordeaux by September 20th at the latest. No time was lost. On October 5th the Prince marched with his army along the left bank of the Garonne, and then, making due south, ravaged all Languedoc till he almost reached the sea-board of the Gulf of Lyons. From Narbonne, which he reached on November 8th, the Prince returned by another route to Bordeaux.¹ In less than two months the English had carried out a raid, brilliant in appearance and perfectly barren in results. The avowed aim and object of the expedition was the harrying of French territory. Fire and sword ravaged the whole district traversed, though, as a rule, walled towns like Carcassonne were left in peace, for the country districts were so much more easily pillaged. "Since this war against the King of France began, in no place has there been such destruction as during this raid," wrote Sir John Wingfield.² The inhabitants themselves could scarce recognise the landmarks of their smiling country after the English army had passed by. From the military point of view the raid is totally negligible. Yet the two months' campaign help to reveal the hatred of France and all things French which was developing in England. If the country could not be conquered, it could be harried, and indeed strategy comes into less and less repute as the war proceeds. The campaigns of 1339 and 1340 had at least been meant to provoke a pitched battle, the raid of the Black Prince had no such intention, and was not conceived on any definite plan. More than this, the raid through Languedoc illustrates one side of the school of chivalry in

¹ Itinerary of an eye-witness, Baker, 128-138; Letters written home in Avesbury, 434-437, 439-443.

² Letter in Avesbury, 442.

which the Black Prince had been educated. The man who had waited at table on captive knights, the man who in the following year was to treat his prisoner King John with every mark of courtesy, was quite callous as to the depredations of his troops, and to support a preposterous claim to the French throne, brought ruin and starvation on thousands of unoffending peasantry, in his own eyes his father's subjects.

Back at Bordeaux, the Prince gave his men little rest, but continued to harass the French borderland, taking some castles and thus pushing English territory a little farther into the enemy's country.¹ The turn of events in France played into his hands, and gave the English another opportunity of planning a double attack on their enemy. Charles of Navarre and his friends were still suspect by their royal master, but we cannot tell what information came to the ears of King John to induce him to appear suddenly at a banquet given to the Norman nobles by his son, the Duke of Normandy, at Rouen on April 5th, 1356. He ordered Charles and his friends to be seized. John of Harcourt and several others were summarily executed, but the King of Navarre was spared. Perhaps more than a suspicion was in John's mind that Charles was conspiring to bring the English into Normandy.² It was but natural that after the scene in the banqueting hall of Rouen the nobles of the Navarrese party, headed by Charles' brother Philip and Godfrey of Harcourt, the uncle of one of the victims, should call to England for help. The English King proceeded at once to take advantage of the internal disturbances of France. An army was fitted out under the command of the Duke of Lancaster, who on June 18th landed at La Hogue. At Montebourg, in the Côtentin, the allied forces gathered, including Philip of Navarre, Godfrey of Harcourt, Robert Knolles, who brought a contingent from the English army in Brittany, and young John of Montfort, claimant to the Duchy of Brittany, who was approaching manhood, and had been brought over from England by Lancaster. On June 22nd these various troops marched into central Normandy. But the expedition was again only a raid, at the most Lancaster had but 1500 men, and, when the French King appeared at the head of an army, retreat was the only possible course, and

¹ Letter of Sir John Wingfield, Avesbury, 445-447; *Chandos Herald*, 43-45.

² See Edward's denial, *Foedera*, iii. 329.

by July 16 Lancaster was back at Montebourg.¹ Again nothing had been accomplished, and after the withdrawal of the English, Evreux and Breteuil, the strongholds of the Navarrese party, had to capitulate. Meanwhile, the Prince of Wales had once more started out from Bordeaux. Froissart believed that his object was to reach Normandy and join hands with Lancaster and the Navarrese. He himself declared that he set out with the intention of having news of his father "as to his passage,"² which may mean that at one time the King had meant himself to enter France from the North with a larger force than had been given to Lancaster, but in any case the attack from Gascony was begun far too late, and conducted in far too leisurely a fashion to be of any service to the English in the North. To attribute strategic fore-thought to either the King or his son is to endow them with a quality which neither possessed. The most probable explanation of all is that the Black Prince hoped that the French forces would be so much engaged in the North that he could harry at his will, and secure the great booty that he had promised his Gascon followers after his last year's raid.

It was on July 6th that the Prince of Wales left Bordeaux on a march which was to culminate in the most brilliant achievement of his career, but he did not reach French territory till he left Bergerac on August 4th. Thence he marched north, harrying Périgord, La Marche, and Berry, as far as Vierzon, near Bourges, but not turning aside to attack fortified places such as Limoges. The only defensible place which he stormed was the Castle of Romorantin (Sept. 3rd), where the prisoners informed him that all the bridges across the Loire had been broken down, and that John of France was in great force behind the river. He therefore moved along its south bank, against the great city of Tours. For four days he lay outside this strong fortress, but as the garrison showed no signs of emerging from behind its protecting walls, he decided on retreat. His position was one of great danger, though probably he did not realise this to the full. It might seem improbable after his experience in Languedoc, that the French would do more than harass his

¹ Avesbury, 461-462; Journal of the raid dated Montebourg, July 16th, *ibid.* 462-465, Knighton, II. 86-88, *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 29-30; Le Bel, II. 193-194, *Chron. des Quatres Premiers Valois*, 38-42.

² *Memorials of London*, 285-286

march. Nevertheless, the most reckless commander would be aware that an army, overloaded with plunder and far from its base, surrounded, too, by peasantry rendered doubly hostile by the loss of their goods, would be sadly hampered if pursued by any considerable force. On September 11th therefore the Prince turned south. An admiring chronicler says that he was longing for battle,¹ but his actions seem rather to imply a prudent desire to escape the attentions of the enemy. When he reached Châtelherault on September 14th he halted for two days. He may perhaps have thought that King John would pursue him no farther, and doubtless his horses, overburdened with spoils, needed rest. By his own confession he was devoid of news, and had no plan for his further progress.²

Meanwhile, King John had been following hard on the footsteps of his enemy. He had crossed the Loire, had advanced to Tours, and by the 13th was only a day's march behind the raiders. On the advice of his captains he determined to try to throw himself between the retreating English and Gascony,³ since with a larger army,⁴ and surrounded by a friendly population, it was his obvious policy to insist on an engagement. By a forced march on the 15th he reached Chauvigny, some miles higher up the river Vienne than Châtelherault, where the Black Prince still lay in total ignorance of the way he had been outgeneralled. On the morning of the 17th scouts brought the news to the English camp, whereupon the Prince at once resumed his march. A battle seemed inevitable, though there might be a chance of escape, since King John had left Chauvigny, and had moved eastwards to guard Poictiers. Leaving the high road which led to Poictiers, the Prince struck across the fields, making great haste, and for the first time leaving his spoils unprotected. As he marched, his advance guard fell in with a portion of the French army, which had made less haste than the King. A skirmish ended in the flight of the French, who were allowed to escape, for pursuit under the circumstances would have been highly dangerous.⁵ The Prince dared not advance farther, for fear of being attacked on

¹ Baker, 141.

² *Memorials of London*, 287.

³ Lescot, 101-102.

⁴ The numbers of the two armies have never been worked out from documents. Dealing with the estimates of chroniclers, M. Delachenal (*Charles V.*, 1. 194-197, 215-218) puts the English force at between six and seven thousand men and the French at about double that number.

⁵ *Eulogium Hist.*, iii. 222. The Prince declared that the French were pursued for three leagues Letter in *Memorials of London*, 287.

the march, and he was compelled to spend the night as best he might under the shelter of a neighbouring wood, where his army suffered tortures for lack of water. Had the French been enterprising they would have descended in force on the temporary encampment, but the Prince was allowed to lead away his men next morning without interruption and to continue his march. The two armies came face to face near Maupertuis. So near were they, that ere long they were both watering their horses at the same stream. Just as hostilities were about to commence Cardinal Talleyrand de Perigord, an emissary of the Pope, induced the combatants to discuss terms of agreement. According to one French chronicler the Prince offered to surrender even Calais or Guînes, if allowed to return unmolested,¹ but this statement is totally uncorroborated. True, he may have feared, as Froissart suggests, that the enemy would refuse battle and would starve him out, as some advised King John to do, but he was not the man to concede humiliating terms to save his own life or that of his men. The parley came to naught, and the Cardinal retired bearing with him the curses of the English, since the negotiations had enabled the French to bring up more men into their line of battle. The only tangible result of his intervention was that the engagement was postponed till the following day.

There can be no certainty as to the exact position occupied by the two armies when day broke on September 19th, but there seems to be good reason to believe that the Prince was encamped at Maupertuis, or in the immediate neighbourhood, and that the French lay opposite him, both of them on the north bank of the Miosson, a little stream which finds its way into the Clain just above Poictiers. Thus the only hope of escape for the English army was to cross the little river between Nouaillé and the French, and thence get on to the high road to Bordeaux. Early in the morning the Prince determined to move off sooner than starve. He did not intend to act on the offensive, but held his troops ready to fall into battle array at the first sign of attack. In this formation he set out for the Miosson,² still under the impression that he could avoid battle,³ but when he reached the high ground near Nouaillé, the French,

¹ *Chron. des Quatre Premiers Valois*, 51-52.

² This is based on the Prince's own account, *Memorials of London*, 288 and on *Chandos Herald*, 71-74.

³ *Ibid.*, 74.

seeing his standard disappearing behind the undulations of the ground, and believing that the men whom they considered in their power were escaping, advanced to the attack. The Prince had manœuvred himself into an excellent position. His flank was guarded by a hedge and ditch, which followed the brow of the rising ground along which he was marching, and this protected his front when he wheeled his men round to meet the advancing enemy. This manœuvre brought the rear-guard under Salisbury to form the right wing of the army. Warwick, with the van, had already crossed the stream, but he was recalled and took up his position on the left wing, while the centre under the Prince lay on a height near Nouaillé. The English were at once dismounted and led up to the protecting hedge. Opposite them the French similarly discarded their horses, some said at the advice of Sir William Douglas,¹ who had joined King John earlier in the year before Breteuil.² They were drawn up in three battles, the first under the Dauphin, the second commanded by his uncle, the Duke of Orleans, and the third by John himself. Two small detachments of cavalry, the only men who remained mounted, under the command of Marshals Jean de Clermont and Arnoul d'Audrehem, began the attack by advancing towards the hedge, and attempting to get through a gap which was used by carts. As the two French commanders had quarrelled, their movement was not concerted, and Salisbury was able to keep them at bay, till Warwick, having brought his men back over the stream, spread his archers along the bank to pour volleys of arrows into the enemy from the flank. The French cavalry were thus repulsed, and, before the first line of dismounted men under the Duke of Normandy could advance, the Black Prince had sent forward a portion of his command, and the English line now held its position in force. Behind the hedge archers and men-at-arms in combination awaited the second struggle, which proved to be long and fierce. When at last the Dauphin's corps retired in good order, they were accompanied off the field by their second division under Orleans, which never struck a blow. But even then the fight was not over. "In times past," cried an astonished eye-witness, "men knew for certain after the third, fourth, or at least the sixth volley of arrows which side would win, but here

¹ Baker, 143.

² Froissart, iv. 194.

a single archer aimed a hundred shafts, and still neither side gave way.”¹ In proof of this King John with the flower of his chivalry now advanced. It was well for his opponents that the second French division had fled, thus giving them a breathing space to carry their wounded into shelter, for when the shock came there ensued the hardest hand-to-hand struggle that the war had hitherto seen. Fierce deeds of prowess were recorded on both sides, men fought as they had never fought before, the archers having spent all their arrows, drew those that had found their mark from the dead and dying and used them once more, or threw themselves into the general mêlée. Though the Prince dashed down from the rear with the men whom he had wisely kept in reserve for the crisis of the battle, this did not turn the scale; only when the Captal de Buch with a small body of horsemen and mounted archers wheeled round to the right, and took the enemy in the rear, did the result of the battle become clear. Surrounded, the French still fought bravely, but their last effort was spent, and amidst dead and dying John was led captive to the Prince.²

So ended a memorable battle, honourable to both sides, and hard fought to the end. Poictiers was in tactics the natural development of Crècy. True, the archers did not play so important a part as heretofore, save in the defeat of the first attack, since the well-armoured knight was less vulnerable than his horse, and being on foot he could not be put out of action by the killing or wounding of his charger. The French had learnt this one lesson since 1346. Steadily there had been a tendency for the man-at-arms to discard his horse. At Taillebourg and at Ardres in 1351, and in the following year at Mauron, the French had fought on foot,³ but they had not discovered the secret of the archer. Cross-bows they had at

¹ *Eulogium Hist.*, iii. 225.

² This account is based mainly on *Chandos Herald*, 63-92, and Baker, 146-153. The former was not an eye-witness, but evidently wrote his poem from a detailed account which lay before him (p. 80), and it is he alone who explains why the rearguard came first into action. Froissart's account (v. 27-59, 254-284) is rejected as a whole by universal consent, but some of his details must be accepted as throwing light on the more accurate accounts from other pens. The great difficulty in this battle is that the best account, that by Baker, obviously attempts to conceal the fact that the Prince was trying to retreat, an attempt which does credit to his generalship, but which was not sufficiently in accordance with the chivalric ideas of the period to be published abroad.

³ *Chron. Normande*, 97, 101

Poictiers, but they were not used in combination with the other arms, and so proved totally ineffective.

Poictiers was a victory almost as barren as that of Crècy. Had not King John been captured, it would have been but the brilliant outcome of a useless raid. As it was, however, the royal prisoner was to prove a valuable asset for the English in negotiation. True to his code, the Black Prince treated King John with the greatest respect, but he none the less realised the advantage he had gained, and hastened to return to Bordeaux, not stopping even to ravage the country through which he passed.¹ However, the military operations of the year did not then cease. Lancaster, after giving up hope of effecting a junction with the Prince, had retired on lower Normandy, and passing into Brittany on the very day that the army of the south reached Bordeaux, laid siege to Rennes, but the fortress held out stubbornly, as had Calais after Crècy, and with greater success, for after nine months' struggle the siege was raised by order of the English King.² Long before this, on March 23rd, 1357, negotiations conducted at Bordeaux had resulted in a truce, and the drawing up of terms of peace which were as yet kept secret, since the Prince had not laid them before his father,³ whereupon the Prince returned to England with his captive to complete the negotiations. Nothing could exceed the courtesy with which John and his fellow-captives were treated. On his arrival Edward III. went out to meet him, and the palace of the Savoy, half-way between London and Westminster, was rented from the Duke of Lancaster for his reception. This served as his head-quarters, for though he was put in charge of a guard, so as to frustrate any attempts at rescue, and armed men kept watch in boats moored near the Savoy entrance from the Thames, he was at liberty to indulge his passion for hunting and to visit the King at Windsor and his cousin the Queen-mother at Hertford.⁴ In the Parliament which met in the following February the negotiations for a definite peace between France and England were much discussed. There was a feeling that John was too valuable an asset to part with readily, and there

¹ Le Bel, ii. 202. The itinerary is given in *Eulogium Hist.*, iii. 225-226.

² Foedera, iii. 353, 359.

³ *Ibid.*, iii. 348-351, *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 56.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vi. 58; Froissart, v. 84. Cf. "Notes et Documents relatifs à Jean, Roi de France et sa Captivité en Angleterre" in *Miscellanies of the Philoblon Soc.* (1855-1856), ii. No. vi.

were many who showed great suspicion of the interference in the proceedings of Pope Innocent VI, who was all for peace. The Pope was looked upon as a mere Frenchman intriguing for French ends, his relations with Edward III were anything but cordial. The Parliament therefore postponed its sanction of a treaty, for fear lest once John was released, the papacy would not listen to English complaints.¹

Despite this check, negotiations still went on. John was given to understand that an agreement was not far off. Moreover, his fellow-prisoner, David, King of Scotland, had been released in the previous October, Edward having renounced his claim to the Scottish throne in return for the promise of 100,000 marks as ransom for his captive and a renunciation of the French alliance by the Scots.² If the English King could abandon the royal title in Scotland, it seemed probable that he would bring himself to make a similar renunciation with regard to France, and now that the Franco-Scottish alliance had been definitely dissolved, English statesmen might be more ready to come to an arrangement with France.

Still the days went by, and John's patience received no reward. The difficulty was that France was during this year in a state of anarchy, this was the day of the turbulent Provost of Paris, Etienne Marcel, who had defied the Regent Charles of Normandy, and there was no real Government in the country. King John might sign anything—but would his subjects carry out his promises? No proper ratification of the treaty could be obtained. Edward seems himself to have been annoyed at the delay, for on December 31st, 1358, he revoked his previous permission to his captive to travel about as he liked within the precincts of the kingdom, and he was kept under strict guard in the Savoy.³ Cowed perhaps by these more rigorous methods, and anxious to obtain his liberty at any price, alarmed, too, by the arrival of envoys from his enemy the King of Navarre in England,⁴ John consented to the terms of a treaty on March 24th. Almost his sole stipulation was that Edward should assist him against the Navarrese enemies of his throne. By this "treaty of London" John agreed to pay a ransom of 4,000,000 golden crowns, and to surrender practically the whole of

¹ Delachenal, *Charles V.*, *Pièces Justificatives*, II. 400-401; *Scalacronica*, 177.

² *Foedera*, III. 372-379.

³ *Ibid.*, III. 411, 413.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 421.

western France, from Calais to the southern limits of Gascony, including the overlordship of Brittany. Thus in a word the Angevin inheritance was to be restored, but in full sovereignty and freed from the obligations which Henry II. had owed to his overlord of France. Both Kings realised that their respective subjects must give their consent to this one-sided treaty if it was ever to be carried out, and a clause provided for its submission to both national assemblies. Though their King had granted away his rights, and though internal divisions had distracted the kingdom from end to end, the French Three Estates with absolute unanimity refused to sanction the partition of their country.¹

Yet France was in a terrible state. Discontent at the maladministration of the kingdom had provoked the popular rising known as the Jacquerie. Charles the Bad, having received his liberty, was doing his best to stultify the authority of the central government; worst of all the country was harried by the "free companies," bands of soldiers of both nationalities, some of them even Italians, who lived by rapine and plunder now that regular war had ceased. It was impossible to journey peacefully from place to place. Each fortress was held by armed men, French, English, or Navarrese, who lived by depredation and pillaged inoffensive travellers. Unbiased observers of the time, however, believed that Edward was conniving at their deeds of violence and robbery.² Meanwhile, the smiling plains of France were reduced to desolation and ashes. In the general lust for plunder friend and foe united to pillage both the peasant and the monk, and there was no one to say them nay. Unhappy countrymen, seeing their villages in flames, fled to the nearest town with their wives, families, and such property as they could carry.³

The refusal of terms by the French in 1359 is the more surprising considering the state of the country, and the fact that it gave Edward III. an opportunity of doing a little pillaging on his own account. Crying out at French perfidy which had rejected a peace which King John had signed, he gave to the world his version of the negotiations, throwing the whole blame upon France. Now at last he declared he would end the war, and compel France to sue for peace.⁴ Soon the attendants of King John, who were removed

¹ *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 151-154.

² M. Villani, Lib. ix. cap. x. p. 169.

³ *Nangis Contin.*, ii. 245-247, 262.

⁴ *Foedera*, iii. 442; *Le Bel*, ii. 246.

from his person, and perhaps French spies also, brought news to the Dauphin that never had so large an army been summoned for the invasion of France as Edward was now preparing; but summer had passed before that army could be set in motion. Early in October the advance guard under Lancaster landed at Calais, and made an excursion into the valley of the Somme, but confined itself mainly to plundering. Meanwhile, the King with the main body crossed to Calais, accompanied by his four eldest sons, and on November 4th marched towards Artois. Edward's great desire was to secure coronation at Reims,¹ and much plundering was out of the question, as the country through which he passed had been visited with such persistency by the robber bands. Indeed the English army had such difficulty in procuring provisions that it was divided into three parts under the King, the Prince of Wales, and the Duke of Lancaster respectively, marching on parallel lines so that each division might tap a different district. The army was furnished with every necessity. According to the French chroniclers a baggage train of six thousand carts carried tents, mills to grind corn, and forges to repair the horses' shoes.²

Passing through Artois, the three English forces did not turn against Paris, as might perhaps have been expected, but concentrated on Reims, though they soon got out of touch with one another and only met again, and that by accident, on November 28th, when they were within ten miles or so of their goal.³ The primatial city of France denied Edward admission, and he set to work to blockade the place without venturing on an assault. But his army suffered terribly from the inclement weather; it was badly housed, and his knights, unused to the hardships of winter campaigning, took refuge in the neighbouring villages. The supply of corn was short, forage had to be sought at a considerable distance, and it needed a present of wine from a friendly "fee company" to revive the flagging spirits of the besiegers. Reims still held out, and tired of the siege, Edward struck his camp on the night of January 11th and marched farther into the heart of France. His objective was now Burgundy, and he penetrated as far as Guillon, where the Burgundians, alarmed by the capture of Flavigny in the very heart

¹ Lescot, 142-143, *Nangis Contin.*, II. 297.

² Le Bel, II. 254-255, Froissart, V. 401, 416-417.

³ Knighton, II. 106, Scalacronica, 187-188.

of the duchy, bought a shameful truce for three years, and the restoration of Flavigny, in return for a large payment of money¹. While in Burgundy, he restrained his men from ravaging the country, hoping perhaps that the ill-feeling existing between the Burgundians and the house of Valois would help him to win friends in this district.² At any rate, so soon as terms had been arranged, the English retired northward, still refraining from plundering, and allowing Nevers and Donzy to buy immunity.

Though practically no resistance had been offered to Edward's advance, the French Government had not been idle, and chose a moment when he was far from his base to develop an attack in his rear by a descent on the English coast. Before leaving England the King had thought this a possible contingency, and had called out the militia under the statute of Winchester to protect the realm in his absence, and his forethought was fully justified. By March 2nd a Norman and Picard fleet was threatening Southampton, Portsmouth and Winchelsea. On March 15th Winchelsea was sacked amid terrible outrages, but before the enemy had been long masters of the town they were set upon and driven back to their ships.³ Reprisals for these raids were taken by Edward in France, for when he heard of the attack on Winchelsea, he began to march direct on Paris, burning, killing, and wasting as he went "them that he had beforehand spared".⁴ On April 7th he was encamped on the heights to the south-east of Paris, and there he stayed, burning the suburbs, but not offering to attack the town itself. On the 12th he moved off towards Chartres. Perhaps he realised that to capture Paris would not assist his object, indeed the possession of the French capital was not an unmixed joy at this period, for it contained a turbulent population which would need a large garrison if it were to be kept under. His idea was to spread death and destruction broadcast so as to drive the enemy to submission. But ere long his army before Paris was threatened with starvation : he had to move on, and he had no sooner left the neighbourhood of the French capital than a terrific thunderstorm burst upon him ; horses and men were struck down, and for a time all was in confusion. This dis-

¹ *Scalacronica*, 189; *Foedera*, iii. 473. ² M. Villani, Lib. ix. cap. lxx. p. 262.

³ *Chron. des Quatres Premiers Valois*, 110-113, *Chronographia*, ii. 290-293; *Knighton*, ii. 109-110, *Scalacronica*, 190-191, *Brut*, 309-310; *Walsingham*, i. 287.

⁴ *Brut*, 310, *Nangis Contin.*, ii. 301-307.

aster, the seriousness of which is emphasised by nearly every chronicler, must have seemed an act of Divine wrath to a man in whom superstition took the place of piety.

But now at last the spirit of the French was broken. On April 27th the Regent's plenipotentiaries left Paris, and the same day arrived at Chartres to offer terms. Edward wished to negotiate with a high hand, and when messengers asked him where he wished the peace to be discussed, he bade them return to Chartres, and await his decision. At length he took up his quarters at Sours, and selected Brétigny, midway between that place and Chartres, as the place of meeting. The conference opened on May 1st and lasted till the 7th, its work being facilitated doubtless by taking the terms which had been rejected by the English authorities in 1358 as a basis of negotiation¹. On May 8th the so-called Treaty of Brétigny was published. The whole Duchy of Aquitaine, including Poitou on the north, Rouergue on the east, Bigorre and Béarn on the south, was ceded to Edward, and in addition Calais with the surrounding country, including the whole county of Guînes, and Ponthieu, the inheritance of Edward's Queen. King John was to be ransomed for 3,000,000 gold crowns, a stupendous war indemnity, the payment of which was to be spread over six years. The agreement could not be concluded in all its details at once, so a truce was proclaimed to last till September, 1361, by which time the "perpetual peace" would be ratified². France could breathe once more. Every one rejoiced, says one chronicler, save those who had taken advantage of the state of war to harass their neighbours,³ though another writer, wise after the event, cried out at the concessions made by the French. The English, he declared, could not have continued the campaign, as the country afforded them no sustenance, and all the inhabitants had retired into walled towns and fortresses, which could easily defy the attacks of the enemy. Moreover, he concludes, the money paid was out of all proportion, since King

¹ This abortive treaty, of which mention is made above, is printed in Delachenal, *Charles V, Pièces Justificatives*, ii. 402-411. Its similarity to the terms agreed upon at Brétigny has led historians to believe that it was a rough draft of the peace there concluded. M. Delachenal (ii. 61-63) gives good reason to believe that it was the first Treaty of London, as he calls it, of 1358, which was never signed. Cf. Professor Tout in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xxv. 159-160.

² *Foedera*, iii. 485-494; *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 173-211.

³ *Nangis Contin.*, ii. 311-312.

John survived his release a very short time¹. This criticism was very much to the point. Edward during his last campaign had failed before Reims, and had not dared to attack Paris. His army was exhausted, and his campaign would in any case have been brought to a close very shortly. Moreover, it was undoubtedly open to question whether John, as a King, was worth even the smallest ransom.

The final ratification of peace proceeded quite normally. Edward crossed to England on May 18th, leaving the Earl of Warwick to superintend the disbanding of the army and the observance of the truce. On July 8th King John landed at Calais, and was there lodged in the castle till the first instalment of his ransom had been paid, and the terms agreed on at Brétigny had finally been ratified. Edward did not return to France till October 9th when he also landed at Calais. From then till the 24th of the same month legal representatives from both sides discussed the final form of the treaty. On the latter date peace was sworn by the two Kings, who heard Mass together and officially ratified the terms of agreement. Each article was separately sealed and delivered, it seemed as if both sides sought to avoid any possible loophole.² When John left Calais a free man on October 25th, and Edward returned to England six days later, the long troubles which had reduced France to misery seemed once for all to be settled, but among the variations between the terms agreed on at Brétigny and the formal treaty of Calais, one was of evil portent. In May it had been agreed that the King of England should withdraw his claim to the French throne and that the King of France should renounce all rights of suzerainty over the districts ceded to his rival. At Calais in October this clause was postponed till such time as the mutual restoration of territories had been accomplished. When this should have been done, commissioners of the two Kings were to meet at Bruges on November 30th (which they never did), and to conclude this part of the treaty. It was very much to the advantage of the French King to keep a hold over his former enemy by retaining his suzerain rights. The traditional policy of France had been to entangle the English Duke of Aquitaine in the meshes of feudal law, and the opportunity for this would be lost were the renuncia-

¹ *Chron. des Quatres Premiers Valois*, 117

² *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 215-217, *Brut*, 312-313, *Foedera*, iii. 514-545.

tions to take effect. On the other hand, Edward would lose no tangible advantage by withdrawing a claim to the French throne, which in its inception had been a mere hollow party move. It was not to this claim but to the anomalous position of the English monarch, who was supreme in England but a vassal in France, that the quarrels between the two countries were due. The solemn oaths and kisses of peace at Calais were of no avail. The latter-day historian can see behind them the smouldering embers which were before long to burst into the flames of war. Then, however, the French were to be led by a monarch whose character and abilities were very different to those of King John, whose reign amid fresh troubles was fast drawing to a close. His son, Louis of Anjou, one of the hostages left in English hands for the payment of the ransom, took advantage of the liberty allowed him at Calais to break his parole. Nothing could induce him to return, and his father crossed to England to treat in person with Edward, some thought to return to captivity in the place of his son. He was treated with great courtesy and lodged once more in the Savoy, but in the spring he died, an exile in a foreign land.¹

¹ *Chronographia*, II. 298-300, Lescot, 159-160, 162, *Nangis Continuatio*, 333, 338-339, *Grandes Chroniques*, VI. 228-229; *Chroniques des Quatre Premiers Valois*, 129-130, 134-135, 143-144; *Eulogium Historiarum*, III. 232, 233; Knighton, II. 118, 119-120.

CHAPTER XII

THE WAR AFTER BRÉTIGNY
(1360-1377)

THOUGH the preliminaries of Brétigny and the Peace of Calais had brought a nominal end to the great war, they did not terminate the troubles of France. Indeed the state of that country remained most miserable. Though many English soldiers returned to their native land at the conclusion of peace, many also stayed to swell the number of unlicensed bands which preyed upon the country. The free companies, joined together in a loose confederation which gave them the name of the "Great Company," began to devastate districts in France which had hitherto escaped the horrors of war.¹ It was in vain that Edward issued a commission for the arrest of all soldiers who were living by plunder in France, or ordered the seizure of James Pipe, Hugh Calverley, and other famous captains, for infringing the peace,² the men whom he had trained to rob would not abandon their new-found profession at his bidding, and roundly declared they owed no allegiance to the English King. Some, it is true, departed to richer fields, and the famous "White Company" in particular entered Italy, to establish there the traditions of the Condottieri, who brought such ruin on their adopted country,³ but others, less adventurous, were content with the spoils of France. Many are the acts of rapine and plunder which the chroniclers had to record, and which official pronouncements anathematised, though they could not prevent. It was indeed not likely that these men would welcome peace. Their point of view is well illustrated by the story told of Sir John Hawkwood, the English soldier who under the name of Giovanni Acuto led the White Company, and earned great fame in Italy. Having been greeted by two friars with the usual salutation, "God give you peace," he

¹ Froissart, vi. 59-61; Walsingham, i. 302; *Brut*, 314.

² Foedera, iii. 630, 685. ³ Murimuth, *Contin.*, 195; *Brut*, 314.

promptly retorted, "God take away your alms. Know you not that I live on war, and that peace would undo me, and that just as I live on war so do you on alms? Thus the answer I gave you is exactly similar to your greeting"¹ Hawkwood is the personification of the brilliant and unprincipled soldier which the wars with France produced, and his portrait on the walls of the Duomo at Florence survives as a record of the adventurous spirit which Edward III. had excited but could not control.

Thus though the English and French nations were at peace, Englishmen and Frenchmen maintained a perpetual warfare. In Brittany this was carried on more or less with the sanction of the respective Kings under cover of the old feud between Montfort and Blois, which had been so closely interwoven with the more important struggle. Edward surrendered the duchy, which he had assumed, to his protégé John de Montfort when he came of age in 1362, and this was followed by a formal alliance between King and Duke.² It was therefore possible for the English army to fight the French supporters of Blois under the pretence of supporting England's ally. The French champion was the famous Bertrand du Guesclin, who though a Breton by birth, was rapidly becoming the personification of French nationality. On the other hand, Sir John Chandos, who had fought at Poictiers and had since earned a great reputation as a soldier, was in 1364 sent to assist De Montfort. He laid siege to Auray, which agreed to surrender if not relieved by September 29th. The Franco-Breton force, led by Charles of Blois, advanced to save the town, and a fierce battle was fought, which in many ways resembled Poictiers. All fought on foot, and the archers were only used in the first stages of the engagement. Chandos, in command of the rear-guard, helped to strengthen all the weak places in the front line, and Sir Hugh Calverley emulated the feat of the Captal de Buch by leading a detachment round to take the enemy in the flank. The French forces were defeated, Du Guesclin was made prisoner, and Charles of Blois lay dead upon the field. Thus did Edward and Charles V break the peace in spirit, for even men of the time recognised this as a battle between England and France³ But the war of Brittany was now at an end. In the following year Charles V. acknowledged John de Montfort as right-

¹ Franco Sacchetti, *Novelle* (Milan, 1874), Novella clxxxii p. 312.

² *Foedera*, iii. 658, 662.

³ *E.g.* Knighton, ii. 121.

ful Duke, and in return was himself acknowledged as suzerain of Brittany.¹ This door into France was closed.

But despite the peace, Englishmen and Frenchmen were still able to find excuse for continuing their rivalry in a disputed succession in Castile. Pedro, fitly surnamed the Cruel, was the reigning King of Castile, being the only legitimate son of Alphonso XI. Hated for his excesses, suspected even of having murdered his wife, Blanche de Bourbon, he had angered Peter, King of Aragon, by seizing certain of his territories, and he had outraged the susceptibilities of all Christendom by allying with the infidel in the person of the Mohammedan King of Granada and by showing favour to the Jews.² It occurred to Charles V. that he might relieve his kingdom from a licentious soldiery by supporting the claims of Henry of Trastamara, Pedro's illegitimate brother, to the throne of Castile. In conjunction with the Pope he allowed Du Guesclin, lately ransomed from captivity, to lead the Companies into Spain, nominally against the King of Granada, but in reality in support of Trastamara. Among the men who flocked to the standard of Du Guesclin were many Englishmen, some of them even, like Calverley, men who had fought against him at Auray. Though Chandos refused an invitation to take part, there was a freemasonry among those soldiers of fortune, which enabled them to fight side by side one day, against each other the next, and yet remain quite loyal to their temporary employer. But Edward was not ready to encourage his subjects to embark on this expedition. He had long striven to secure the alliance of Castile, and in the days of Alphonso XI he had arranged the marriage of his daughter Joan to Pedro who was then heir-apparent. Joan, however, succumbed to the Black Death on her way to Spain³, and since then English relations with Castile had been somewhat strained. Previous interference with English shipping developed two years later, upon the accession of Pedro to the throne, into the threatened invasion of England, but Edward having waylaid a large Spanish fleet on its way home from Sluys gained a brilliant naval victory off Winchelsea.⁴ Since then

¹ Treaty of Guérande, printed in Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne* (Paris, 1742 Preuves, 1. cols. 1588-1599

² Froissart, vi. 185-186; *Chronique de Bertrand du Guesclin*, i. 240-243

³ Baker, 97.

⁴ Generally called "Espagneuls Sur Mer," Aug 29th, 1350. Foedera, iii. 201, Baker, 109-111; Walsingham, i. 274-275, Avesbury, 412.

peace had reigned between the two countries, and Edward was therefore quite consistent in encouraging the Prince of Wales, now Duke of Aquitaine, to welcome Pedro, when driven into exile by the invading army of Du Guesclin in 1366. The Prince, who had few gifts of peace, was only too pleased to draw his sword once more, and, despite the warnings of his wife and Chandos, prepared to cross the Pyrenees with Pedro, who had come to Bordeaux to urge his cause. What cared he for the evil reputation of his would-be ally? Royal rights had been impugned and must be vindicated. It is evident that Edward III. and his son looked on the Spanish succession question very largely from the point of view of legitimacy fighting for its rights against illegitimacy,¹ a point of view which was peculiar to the northern nations of Europe, for neither in Spain nor in Italy was bastardy considered a serious disqualification to succession.

Pedro was lavish of promises. When the question of the expenses of the campaign was raised, he agreed to devote such treasure as he had with him to the enterprise, and to repay the Prince if he would advance the necessary ready money.² From September, 1366, onwards great preparations were made for the coming expedition. The English serving under Du Guesclin in Spain were recalled. Chandos was commissioned to enlist the services of the free lances who were still in France, and the Gascon nobles were invited to assist. Conscious that taxation for such a purely personal voyage of adventure would be unpopular, the Prince melted down his plate to meet his liabilities, his father apportioned him an allowance from the ransom of King John, and his brother, John of Gaunt, now Duke of Lancaster, returned to England to raise a contingent with his father's sanction.³ Still the expedition was delayed. Lancaster could not sail till late in the year, and the Princess of Wales urged her husband to delay his departure till her expected confinement took place. On January 6th, 1367, the future King Richard II was born, and four days later his father left Bordeaux to join the army which had been assembling at Dax, followed by his brother, who had not arrived before he started.⁴ It was still uncertain whether the Pyrenees could be

¹ Foedera, iii. 823-824, Political Songs (Rollo Series), i. 101.

² Foedera, iii. 800-807.

³ Delpit, *Documents*, 125-126

⁴ Chandos Herald, 132-147; Froissart, vi. 207-218, 228-234; vii. 1-2; Chron. de Bertrand du Guesclin, 1. 374-382.

crossed without fighting. The pass of Roncesvalles, that narrow passage made famous for ever by the songs of the *Tiouvères* and the legend of Roland's heroic death, must be traversed, and this was within the territory of Charles the Bad. Would the King of Navarre allow a free passage? Having been invited to state the price of his assistance, he had promised his co-operation to both sides for a consideration, and it was therefore doubtful which bribe he would finally decide to earn, for, as Froissart puts it, he was no easy man to deal with when he saw that his help was sorely needed.¹ However, his mind was made up for him by Calverley, who on his way to join the Prince, after taking a friendly farewell of Du Guesclin in the true *condottiere* spirit, so alarmed him by sacking some Navarrese towns that he agreed to allow the English a free passage through his territories.² Accordingly on February 15th the army began its dangerous march across a high pass in winter, and after some unpleasant experiences encamped round Pampeluna.

The Prince intended to march on Burgos, where Henry had collected his forces, but he took a circuitous route by Salvatierra and Vittoria, sending out the while a scouting party under Sir Thomas Felton, who crossed the Ebro at Logroño, and having reconnoitred round Navarette, rejoined the main body near Salvatierra. The two opposing armies came into touch with each other when the Prince reached Vittoria, where the Spaniards surprised Lancaster's command, being only prevented from gaining a notable success by the timely arrival of Chandos and the Prince of Wales. On the advice of Du Guesclin the usurper sought to keep the English in their highland resting-place till hunger compelled a retreat. Exposed to the full force of a stormy March, surrounded by a mountainous country which afforded his men little or no sustenance, the Black Prince seemed to be caught like a rat in a trap, till his scouts found him a way of escape by way of Viana to Logroño, which commanded the passage of the Ebro, a clever manœuvre reminiscent of the strategy of King John's army before Poictiers. Still his original choice of the roundabout and perilous route through Vittoria, instead of dropping down directly to the open country round Logroño, is inexplicable, more especially as that place was steadily faithful to Pedro's cause, and the centre of a fruitful

¹ Froissart, vi. 209.

² *Chandos Herald*, 148-150, Ayala, 434-437.

country. By April 1st the Prince had reached Navarette, a short distance beyond the river, while Henry, hearing that he had been outmanœuvred, had hastened back to intercept the advance on Buigos and lay at Nájera. On April 3rd the two forces joined battle between Navarette and Nájera, in a large open space, free from trees or any other obstruction, in which Henry thought that he could use his numerous cavalry to advantage. The English were all dismounted, but only the van of the enemy under Du Guesclin fought on foot. The English advanced to the attack covered by a veritable hail of arrows. Soon the two vans, under Lancaster and Du Guesclin respectively, were locked in fierce hand-to-hand combat, and the two second lines, under the Prince and Henry, advanced each to support their own men. It was at this juncture that the fate of the battle was decided. The two wings of the English second line, the right under the Captal and the left under Sir Thomas Percy, threw themselves upon the wings of the enemy's second line, which had been meant to support Du Guesclin: but the masses of light horse of which it was composed fled, after a little very half-hearted fighting, from before the fire of Edward's archers.¹ Percy and the Captal were therefore able to swing round on the enemy on either side, and take them on both flanks, and the Castilian infantry in the rear fled. The day was lost despite the heroism of Henry and Du Guesclin, the former being compelled to flee, after many desperate charges, while the latter was taken prisoner. The English drove the routed Spaniards back into Nájera, where thousands were drowned or slain, for the Najarilla river cut off the retreat.²

The news of Nájera spread like lightning through Europe. England rejoiced, Germany applauded, and France cried out in dismay. England's poets sang the triumph of this hero of chivalry, and one of their poems has come down to us, annotated with loving care, evidently by some schoolmaster, who used the story of this expedition and battle to instil a love of great deeds into his pupils.³

¹ Such at least is the inference from Chron. Normande's statement (p. 184) that the Castilians have suffered heavily from the English archers.

² Ayala, i. 453-458; cf. 440-443 (he took part in the battle), *Chandos Herald*, 204-234; Froissart, vii. 30-48, 278-292, *Chronique des quatres Premiers Valois*, 179-181.

³ Political Songs (Rolls Series), i. 97-122.

But it was a victory not worth the winning, for Nemesis was near at hand to punish this gratuitous interference in Castilian politics. Once secure of the throne, Pedro showed that nothing but main force would induce him to meet his obligations, though again he had sworn most solemnly to do so. The Prince, receiving no money, was obliged to live on the country, as time went on allowing his soldiers more and more license, and towards the beginning of September he re-crossed the pass of Roncesvalles, recalled by the news that the dethroned Henry, who had escaped into Provence, was hairyng the Duchy of Aquitaine. It was not long before Henry was once more fighting his half-brother in Spain, and within two years of the victory of Nájera, Pedro had been utterly defeated in the field and murdered by his rival. Thus the result of the expedition of 1367 was to make an enemy of the man who was to ascend the throne of Castile, to empty the Prince's exchequer, to decimate a noble army, and to sow the seeds of disease in the Black Prince, who within a few weeks of the return of the army to Aquitaine began to show signs of that malady which was to bear him steadily towards the grave. A barren victory could not atone for disasters such as these, since they gave the opportunity for which Charles V. was quietly waiting. He had been reared in a hard school, and had learnt early in life the necessity to conceal his real feelings when politics were concerned. If there was some truth in the Duke of Lancaster's taunt that he was nothing but a lawyer, his retort that, if that were so, he would bring an action against the English, the result of which would dismay them, was very much to the point.¹ It was not an heroic method according to the ideas of the age, and even his admirers thought it necessary to defend his claim to the virtues of chivalry,² but it was to prove more effective than the chivalric methods of his father. For such a man the Black Prince was no match. In him the polished manners of the knight concealed many failings of character. With no real patriotism, he conceived that peoples were created to do the bidding of princes, and to provide them with opportunities of winning fame and glory. Even the courtier Froissart knew that "the Prince was of an overbearing spirit and cruel in hatred; he insisted that,

¹ "Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre des Fois du sage Roy Charles*," part iii cap. xxxix. in Petitot, *Collection des Mémoires*, vi. 58.

² *Ibid.*, v. 385.

were he right or wrong, all his vassals should do his bidding".¹ His undoubted courage, and the charm of manner which won the loyalty of his immediate followers, were of no avail when he came to govern the Duchy of Aquitaine. He was no man of business, the extravagance of his Court brought him many financial worries,² and his diplomatic blunders often produced serious consequences. Time had been when the only necessary qualification for a prince was to be a soldier, but statesmanship was now coming to be an essential quality. Knight-errantry might defeat King John, it could do nothing against the astute plans of Charles V.

The Black Prince had to meet the crisis of his rule in Aquitaine on his return from Castile. Though he had refrained from taxing his subjects for the campaign, he now secured the giant of a hearth tax (*focagium*) from the three estates of the duchy to remove his financial embarrassment.³ Just as a few years later a poll tax was to set a light to the tinder of rebellion in England, so did this hearth tax kindle the growing discontent of the Gascon barons, already annoyed at their loss of independence now that Aquitaine was governed directly from England. Thus though the commercial community was far too conscious of the advantages of the trade connection with England to attempt to defy English rule, the nobles, thoroughly imbued with the separatist doctrine of feudalism, organised a combined resistance to the new tax. The attitude of the two sections of the community is well illustrated in the case of Rodez, where the lower city was quite willing to pay, but the upper burgh protested at the instigation of the Count of Armagnac.⁴ The Prince, if he realised the gravity of the danger, showed no signs of moderating his policy. Chandos, statesman as well as soldier, protested now, as he had protested before, against this taxation, knowing well the opposition it would excite, but failing to influence his obstinate master, he retired to his Castle of Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte. Meanwhile, the course of events in Aquitaine was playing into the hands of Charles V. The free companies, paid off after the Castilian expedition, poured into France once more, and announced that they had been bidden to do so by the Prince when he dismissed them, while the discontented

¹ Froissart, vi. 233.

² *Chandos Herald*, 107-108.

³ January 26th, 1368, *Archives de Bordeaux* (Bordeaux, 1867), i. 172.

⁴ J. Rouquette, *Le Rouergue sous les Anglais* (Millau, 1887), 131.

Gascon nobles, in May, 1368, appealed against the actions of their Duke to his overlord of France. Yet Charles still held his hand, though when he declared himself ready to pay the balance of King John's ransom, the Prince warned his father not to listen to fair words. But the warning fell on deaf ears, for already a party hostile to the Prince was gaining ground in England. It was said with some truth that he was impatient of peace, and the King was induced to warn his son against aggravating a renewal of the struggle.¹ For a moment it seemed likely that the Prince would be recalled from his government, perhaps on the plea of his impaired health, and preparations were made for his journey home, but nothing further was done.² On his side Charles made his preparations. In June he came to a secret agreement with the Count of Armagnac and the other discontented nobles of Aquitaine: in November he signed an offensive and defensive alliance with Henry of Tastamara, and early in 1369, having taken advice on the legal point, he summoned the Duke of Aquitaine as his vassal to appear at Paris, to answer the complaints lodged by Armagnac and his associates. The blow had fallen. The carelessness or calculated dilatoriness of both sides, which had left unexecuted the mutual renunciation of claims after the Peace of Brétigny, now enabled Charles to assert the rights of overlordship, and the Prince's blustering reply that he would answer the summons at the head of 60,000 men deceived no one. He himself knew that the enemy counted on his impaired health,³ and in a fit of pique he had allowed Du Guesclin, the great leader on whom all French hopes were fixed, to ransom himself from captivity.

Charles still temporised even after the Prince of Wales's defiance. But in April a present of wine sent by him to the English King was politely returned, and in May diplomacy came to an end, when at a Council held in Paris the claims of the two sovereigns and their complaints against one another were rehearsed and discussed. Edward was declared to have fallen under the ban of excommunication which the Pope had issued against the free companies, since he had abetted their depredations,⁴ and retorted by formally resuming the title of King of France.

¹ Walsingham, i. 306-307

² Foedera, iii. 845.

³ *Chandos Herald*, 265.

⁴ *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 275-306. Cf. document in Froissart (ed. Kervyn),

England embarked on the struggle practically without allies. Edward's diplomacy had broken down in every quarter. Even the anglophilic Count of Flanders was compelled to marry his daughter Margaret, the promised bride of Edward's son Edmund, to Charles's brother, Philip of Burgundy; the Germans adopted an attitude of neutrality, only the King of Aragon was willing to throw in his lot with Edward. If we decline to accept Froissart's story of the royal scullion sent by Charles V. to defy his enemy, we must take it that there was no formal re-opening of hostilities. Indeed they had never quite ceased, and the French King took advantage of this to secure a foothold upon English territory before Edward was ready to strike. The county of Ponthieu responded to the rising spirit of French patriotism, and welcomed French garrisons sent to occupy Abbeville and other fortified places. Before he could realise it, Edward had lost his grandmother's inheritance, and the district which had witnessed his great military exploit at Crecy.¹ The Duke of Anjou mustered his men in Auvergne, the Duke of Berry did the same at Toulouse, while a fleet under the Duke of Burgundy was ordered to prepare an attack on the English coast, to keep Edward occupied at home. Still more threatening was the attitude of the Scots, who Edward feared would attack him in the rear, did he put forth his whole strength to avert the dangers across the channel. They had been exasperated by David's extravagance and his liking for England and English ways, and most of all by their childless king's proposal to adopt a son of Edward as his heir.² To secure his rear Edward in July, 1369, agreed to a truce of fourteen years and to accept the unpaid portion of David's ransom in reasonably small instalments, and at the same time sought to harass Charles V. by promising all French lands to those who should capture them, save only those belonging to the Crown and the Church.

The war thus begun was nothing but a series of English reverses. No striking victory was won by the French, but within six years they had practically reconquered all that had been lost, thus revealing the essential weakness of English strategy. Raids were an excellent method of paying a discontented soldiery, and of striking terror into men already numbed by such brilliant feats of arms as Crecy or Poictiers, but as a means of holding conquered

¹ One English chronicler describes this as an infraction of the truce, *Brut*, 321.

² *Foedera*, iii. 715; *Acts of the Parl. of Scotland*, i. 134-137, *Wyntoun*, ii. 506.

districts they were worse than useless. Moreover, Frenchmen were beginning to recover some of their old fire. Charles V. had re-organised the government, Du Guesclin had struck the imagination of a despondent people, and the qualities combined in the persons of these two great leaders started a rally to the national standard, which the English could not resist. Edward failed entirely to equip any great army of invasion. In July, 1369, the Duke of Lancaster devastated the country side from Calais to Boulogne, and tried to provoke to battle the Duke of Burgundy, who was making preparations for the invasion of England. But the French policy was to harass, not to fight, and Lancaster returned to Calais with no advantage gained, but with much plunder, leaving behind him a trail of burnt villages and homesteads. During the same year there was a good deal of miscellaneous fighting on the borders of Aquitaine and in Poitou, where the gallant Chandos fell in battle very shortly afterwards. Great were the rejoicings in France at the death of the English champion.¹ Amid the unhappy demoralisation which resulted from the methods of warfare adopted by King Edward and his son, Chandos stood out a venerable and noble figure. Wise enough to see the gathering storm, he had done his best to restrain the rashness of the Prince of Wales, and perhaps it was as well that the fine old soldier did not live to see the final humiliation of his countrymen in the land where he had led them to victory. The death of Chandos almost synchronised with the return of Du Guesclin from Spain in 1370, where he had been replacing Henry of Trastamara on the Castilian throne, and to meet the growing danger two English expeditions were fitted out: one under Lancaster, was despatched to Gascony to assist, and it would seem almost to supersede, his sick brother:² the other under Robert Knolles was directed to Calais.³ Lancaster landed at Bordeaux, to find that an army was being hastily summoned to Cognac by the Prince of Wales, who had learnt that the Bishop of Limoges, his erstwhile friend, had betrayed his city to the French. Roused from his lethargy, he had sworn to be avenged on this treacherous city. Despite the efforts of Du Guesclin, who was invading Perigord, the armies of the two

¹ *Chandos Herald*, 271.

² *Foedera*, iii. 894; *Lettres de Ross*, ii. 176-177; Dep. Keeper's Rep., xxxi.; App. p. 36.

³ *Cal. of Letter Book G.*, 263.

brothers formed a junction and together marched on Limoges. After a few days' siege the town was taken by assault. The Black Prince had been too ill to conduct the siege in person, but he was borne on a litter into the city, which he ordered to be sacked to such effect, that at the end of the day only the Cathedral still stood, and of the inhabitants it is said that only five survived to recount the horrors of their ghastly experience. By his brutal conduct at Limoges the Prince put a fitting crown to his military career. The sack of this unfortunate place was not merely the action of a petulant invalid, not the solitary blot on an unstained scutcheon. It was the natural climax to years of unbridled plundering. The capture of Limoges brought the English cause no advantage. Nor was Knolles more successful. He plundered, burnt, and ravaged Northern France, threatened the gates of Paris, and then made off westwards towards Brittany. Disaffection appeared among his troops, many deserted, and Du Guesclin, lately promoted to be Constable of France, harassed the retreating English.

Throughout the year 1371 the Duke of Lancaster was in command in Aquitaine, having been appointed his brother's Lieutenant,¹ and was constantly fighting on the borderland with no great success. He was terribly embarrassed by lack of funds. In England, Edward was straining every nerve to raise money. He had had great difficulty in fitting out the expeditions of 1370,² and in February, 1371 he negotiated a loan of £4621 13s 4d. from certain Londoners on the security of the customs,³ which seems to imply that the city in its corporate capacity was unwilling to advance the money. But none of this was forthcoming for Aquitaine, and in July the Duke of Lancaster resigned his lieutenancy, as there was no means of paying his troops and he could not accept the responsibility of quartering them on a discontented population.⁴ It was not till the following April that the Earl of Pembroke was appointed to succeed him, and then this new Lieutenant was unable to reach Bordeaux. On his way to take up his command he was met by a fleet, sent to oppose his passage by the King of Castile, who was only too glad to repay the English for the part they had played against him. Off La Rochelle a two

¹ Delpit, *Documents*, 131. The Prince had returned to England; Walsingham, i. 312.

² *Ibid.*, i. 309; *Brut*, 322. Cf. Cal. of Letter Book G, 263

Ibid., 275-276.

⁴ Delpit, *Documents*, 179-180.

days' naval battle ended in the total discomfiture of Pembroke's ships, and the capture of the commander himself. Nothing is more indicative of the decadence of English arms than the steady loss of command of the sea. For some time no adequate protection had been afforded to the English coast, in 1369 Portsmouth had been burnt, and in 1372 Parliament complained bitterly of the way Edward's claim to be lord of the sea had proved quite illusory.¹ It was in vain that the enfeebled King tried to rally the despondent spirits of his subjects, by leading an expedition in person to relieve La Rochelle, which had now surrendered to the enemy. For nine weeks he struggled against contrary winds, and in the end he was compelled to put into Winchelsea, abandoning a project which had cost him much money that could ill be spared.² Meanwhile, bit by bit Du Guesclin and his men were reconquering the provinces ceded by France at Brestigny, though no blare of trumpets heralded each success, no brilliant victories punctuated their advance. By April, 1373, the French were ready to attack Brittany. John de Montfort had been acknowledged Duke by Charles V, but he had failed to maintain a neutral attitude after the renewal of the Anglo-French struggle. Leaning as he did towards England,³ where he had lived during the impressionable years of childhood, he alienated many who were beginning to show a sense of French unity or preferred to support the winning side. Thus Olivier de Clisson, a well-tried supporter of the house of Montfort, abandoned his master, and entered into an alliance with his enemy Du Guesclin in 1370.⁴ Feeling that his subjects were hesitating in their allegiance, Montfort openly threw himself into the arms of England. At his request an English force was sent to Brittany under John Lord Neville in 1372, and in the following spring the Earl of Salisbury took over further reinforcements. But this availed him nothing. Pressed hard by Du Guesclin, he saw place after place lost, the Bretons being only too willing to welcome the invaders, and in despair he fled to England.

Desperate efforts were made to drive back the French, but the only expedient that occurred to Edward was another plundering

¹ Rot. Parl., ii. 311.

² Walsingham, i. 315; Foedera, iii. 962, Brut, 326, Chandos Herald, 279-280.

³ Grandes Chroniques, vi. 337.

⁴ Document in Petitot, *Collection des Mémoires*, v. 182-184.

expedition, which might provoke a pitched battle. In July, 1373, John of Gaunt landed at Calais with a well-equipped army, and proceeded to march through the length of the country, pillaging and destroying as he went, but under the advice of Du Guesclin and his chief military advisers, Charles refused to abandon his masterly policy of inaction¹. This was the longest and greatest of all the English raids of the Hundred Years' War. It penetrated through the very heart of France, shepherded by a considerable French force which picked off stragglers and harassed detachments which had strayed from the main body. The English marched through Artois and Vermandois into Champagne. At Troyes it seemed as though they might retake their steps, but their leader determined to push on despite the approach of winter, possibly in the vain hope of emulating his brother's achievement at Poictiers. Not till December did he lead the remainder of his army into Bordeaux, bedraggled, armouless, the shadow of the proud array that had marched out from Calais. The severe weather, disease, and the attentions of the enemy had accounted for nearly half his men, his baggage train was but a straggling remnant. The mountain passes of Auvergne had done what no pitched battle could have effected. Despite its complete failure, this march appealed to the chivalric mind. One French chronicler considered it in some ways the greatest military event of the whole war,² and another thought its accomplishment did much honour to the English!³ But it was really an exemplification of English failure. After Lancaster's return home all Aquitaine, save the sea-coast lands from Bayonne to the Bordelais, accepted French rule. Peace was a necessity, and the Pope had again been trying to bring about such a desirable state of affairs. At length a truce for one year was agreed to at Bruges in June, 1375, prolonged in the following March to April, 1377.

Edward III's wars in France were over. He had startled Europe, for a brief moment he had placed his country in the forefront of European politics. He lived to see his plans defeated, and his ambitions shattered, his heir dying and himself a wreck, his subjects wearied and worn with taxation, his many conquests lost. Only Calais was left—the solitary monument to the blood and treasure expended. Worse than this, the nation had been unsettled. Men

¹ Froissart, viii. 161-163.

² *Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois*, 274.

³ *Grandes Chroniques*, vi. 340-341.

who had lived on plunder in France were not likely to return down to peaceful retirement at home, and the disbanded soldiery was ready to give organisation to the discontented at home. Before many years had passed the leader of the revolution of 1381 was to be a discharged soldier.¹ Still Edward's wars had in other directions a more wholesome effect. A nation hitherto unknown on the battle-fields of Europe suddenly became acknowledged as one of the first fighting forces. "When I was young," wrote Petrarch, "the English were considered the most timid of the barbarians, now they have defeated the most warlike French,"² and this would scarcely have been possible without the yeoman archer, who had been encouraged to practise his art on festivals and holidays in preference to football, cockfighting, and other useless games.³

The rise of the archer alone is a factor of overwhelming social importance. Despite the spirit of chivalry which increased the weight and completeness of the knight's armour,⁴ despite the single combats which Froissart describes with such care, it was really the light-armed man, the yeoman, who was becoming the determining factor in English tactics. The prominence of the yeoman and the new tactics of all fighting on foot had a real democratic effect. In the English armies in France there were no signs of that overbearing spirit which caused quarrels for precedence among the French at Crecy, and brought disaster on Edward II at Bannockburn. Gentle and simple fought side by side and learnt a mutual understanding and respect. There was yet another factor in the English armies which had an influence on social relations. Just as commerce was producing the self-made man, so was war. The Free Companies were recruited from the adventurous spirits who wished to better their position. We are told that many a man, poor and of low estate, found his way from England to France and became rich and powerful, thanks to the war,⁵ and more than one chronicler of the time

¹ Froissart, x. 108. That Wat Tyler was a discharged soldier rests only on Froissart's statement, but it is supported by the statement of one of the King's retinue that he was a noted robber ("Anominal Chronicle" in Oman, *Great Revolt*, 201).

² *Petrarcae Epistolae Familiares* (Florence, 1863), iii 162

³ Foedera, iii. 704, 770, Cal. of Letter Book G, 154, 194

⁴ See e.g. the description of a knight's armour in "Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight" (*Early Eng. Text Soc.*, 1866), 19-20.

⁵ *Scalacronica*, 178.

believed it possible that Sir Robert Knolles had risen from the lowest rank to be a prominent captain in the English army.¹ The system of raising troops followed by Edward III. assisted this process. Sometimes he had recourse to Commissions of Array, a method of levying picked troops by impressment which was very unpopular in Parliament,² since they were usually not paid, though a statute of the first year of his reign condemned this practice.³ More usually Edward gathered his armies by the system of indentures, whereby he entered into an agreement with a man who promised to provide a certain number of soldiers at a certain definite scale of pay, the men being raised, organised, and led by the contractor. Such a system as this offered great opportunities for making money, and for the small man to rise gradually to affluence. Thus the long war with France was not without its influences on internal English history, and helped in more ways than one to mould the destinies of the nation.

¹ Walsingham, i. 286, Higden (contin.), viii. 372, Knighton, ii. 102.

² Rot. Parl., ii. 149, 160 Cf Baker, 76.

³ Statutes, i. 256.

CHAPTER XIII

POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS (1333-1377)

THE political storm with which the reign of Edward III. ended, and the social troubles of the early years of Richard II. were obviously interwoven with the after-effects of the disastrous struggle with France : but not so obvious at first sight is it, that all through the reign of the third Edward domestic affairs were developing under the influence of his aggressive policy. By introducing the principle of a paid army, Edward I. had revolutionised not only military history, but the whole financial and social basis of English government. It was now no longer possible for the King to "live of his own". His inherited rights and privileges of taxation were no longer sufficient to meet the growing demands on his purse, and at the same time the nation, or at least a portion of it, had awakened to the fact that kings must to a certain extent govern by consent.¹ It is therefore not surprising that Parliament took advantage of the situation to increase its powers. In 1339 it showed that it realised its advantage by refusing to vote money till the electors had been consulted,² and when in 1340 "the inneare love of the peple was turned into hate, and the commune prayrs into cursinge, for cause that the commune peple were strongliche ygreved" at the burden of taxation,³ it secured in return a grant that no aids, tallages, or other imposts be raised by royal authority alone, but only with the consent of the estates of the realm in Parliament.⁴

Edward was not the man to yield without a struggle, but later in the same year he had to suffer defeat in a struggle with Parliament. All through the inglorious campaign of 1340 he had been

¹ See e.g. Rot. Parl., ii. 60-61, 64, 69.

² Rot. Parl., ii. 104.

³ Brut, 293-294.

⁴ Rot. Parl., ii. 112-113; Statutes, i. 288-289.

in want of money. Again and again he wrote from Ghent urging his ministers to forward him instalments of the taxes that had been granted. But the "false traitors," as the royalist chronicler called them, replied that they had barely enough to pay household expenses at home, for the money was not coming in, and the temper of the people was such that they would rise in rebellion if pressed to pay.¹ Edward came rushing home in a rage. He then and there ordered the Mayor of London to arrest those laymen whom he suspected of treachery, including a large number of judges, and had them brought before a special tribunal to be sentenced to confinement in various parts of the kingdom. The Chancellor and Treasurer escaped arrest, as Edward dared not infringe the privileges of their orders, but he ordered William de Kildesley to denounce the Archbishop in a violent diatribe at the London Guildhall.² Stratford, who had fled for protection to the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury,³ addressed a long letter to the King in which he vindicated his position with dignity, and declared himself ready to stand his trial before his peers in full Parliament. At the same time he showed that he meant to offer a stout resistance to his opponents, by urging the Chancellor to stop the collection of the giant made by the clergy, by advising the Bishops to resist payment, and by excommunicating all disturbers of the peace, in other words his enemies.⁴ Edward grew more and more furious at this defiance of his authority, the more so as his opponent disregarded a definite summons to appear before him at Westminster. Fearing the letters of his opponent might make his own conduct appear in an unpleasant light, he ordered a counter letter, reaching almost to the proportions of a pamphlet, to be drawn up, attacking the Archbishop in terms which could only reflect shame on their author.⁵ So the pamphlet war went on till Parliament met in April. Stratford and the King each fought hard for his position, the former asserting his right to be tried by his peers, the latter attempting to bring his ex-chancellor to justice before the Court

¹ *French Chron. of London*, 82-83.

² Murimuth, 117-118

³ Avesbury, 324.

⁴ Hemingburgh, ii. 367-375, Walsingham, i. 234-240; Wilkins' *Concilia*, ii. 659-660

⁵ Foedera, ii. 1147-1148; Hemingburgh, ii. 380-388; Avesbury, 330-336, Walsingham, i. 241-247; Wilkins' *Concilia*, ii. 660-663.

of Exchequer. Public opinion was decidedly on the Archbishop's side: the Lords looked with favour on his effort to assert his right to a seat in their midst, and vainly did royal agents try to stir up the Londoners against him, since the citizens were fighting a battle of their own with the King. At length Edward was forced to give way. A Committee of Lords having reported that a peer could not be tried save by his fellow-peers in full Parliament,¹ he was compelled to allow his opponent to answer the charges brought against him in the way he had offered to do all along.²

The result of this dispute was a distinct triumph for the nation over the King. Nor was Parliament slow to follow up its advantage. The Lords secured a confirmation of the privilege which they had enunciated during the struggle,³ and, together with the Commons, wrung a reluctant consent from the King to many demands, foremost amongst which were the rights to appoint auditors to examine the accounts of public moneys, and to have a voice in the selection of ministers, who were to be sworn in Parliament, where they should answer all complaints made against them.⁴ It mattered comparatively little that Edward went back on his word, and in answer to the protests of his ministers, later in the year, revoked all his concessions on the plea that they infringed his prerogative. He had been compelled to own himself beaten: if only for a time the sanctity of the royal prerogative had been infringed. Distrust of his honesty induced the Commons to adopt the principle of making supply conditional on the redress of grievances, an idea which had shown itself in an incipient form in 1339, when supply was postponed till the following Parliament.⁵ In 1344 the principle was definitely laid down, with the additional demand that the money voted should be used for the purpose for which it had been sought,⁶ and four years later a long and serious indictment against the Government had to be answered and the grievances removed, before the King could obtain a grant. On this last occasion, mindful of past evasions, Parliament insisted that the answers once given should remain unaltered.⁷

This distrust was only too well grounded. Edward's conception

¹ Rot. Parl., ii. 127

² For the whole quarrel see Birchington in *Anglia Sacra*, i. 20-41

³ Statutes, i. 295.

⁴ Rot. Parl., ii. 128-131, Statutes, i. 296.

⁵ Rot. Parl., ii. 105.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 200-201.

of Parliament was that of a useful machine for making Europe in general, and France in particular, believe that he had the nation behind him. This was practically the way in which Philip the Fair had regarded the French Estates General, but there was far more vitality about parliamentary institutions in England than in France, though Edward did have some success in his efforts to evade control. When short of money in 1346, he bethought himself that he had recently knighted his son and therefore, disregarding the statute of 1340, levied a feudal aid, and that at 40s. the knight's fee, instead of the customary 20s. Moreover, he frequently sought to evade parliamentary control by securing a direct grant from the merchants of his kingdom.¹ But Parliament never failed to protest, and never for a moment laid aside its claims to have a say in the internal management of the kingdom. Steadily therefore Edward lost the popularity he had once enjoyed, while the war grew more and more disliked on the ground of cost. The spirit of discontent was increasing all through the latter portion of Edward III's reign. Royal authority was commencing to be questioned. Europe had been startled and made to think by the advanced democratic theory of Marsiglio of Padua, and the more practical and less revolutionary theories of the Englishman, William of Ockham. In England itself it was possible for a popular writer to say of a sovereign that "micht of the communes made hym to regne",² government by consent was coming to be understood as a working principle of political philosophy.

This feeling, combined with the growing sense of national entity, led Englishmen to question the authority of the Papacy to interfere in domestic matters, and to thrust aliens into English benefices. The Babylonish captivity of Avignon, and the suspicion that the Papacy was nothing more than a political weapon at the command of France, helped to strengthen English objections to Papal authority outside the realm of dogma. Let the Pope have mercy on Holy Church, and learn to govern himself ere he pretends to control her destinies, is the cry of the reformer,³ and the spirit of independence, shown in the reign of Edward I. at the Parliament of Lincoln, was rekindled at the reiteration of the Papal privilege to provide Papal friends with English revenues. The Government

¹ Rot. Parl., II. 140, Foedera, III. 459-460.

² *Vision of Piers Plowman*, Text B, Prologue, p. 5.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

was subject to fits of uneasiness about the increase of alien holders of English benefices, and in 1334 returns of the numbers of such persons were ordered from the various dioceses. In 1343 a more determined protest was made by the nation in Parliament—Lords and Commons, the clergy abstaining, pointed out very clearly the disastrous results of imposing on English parishes and cathedrals foreign priests who had nothing in common with their flocks, and who did not even understand their language¹. On May 18th a letter containing these remonstrances was despatched by special messenger to the Pope, who denied ever having done such things as were complained of, only to be at once convicted of falsehood by the English envoy, Sir John of Shoreditch, who gave a specific instance². The action of Parliament could not be ignored, and Edward himself had to take action. In July he issued proclamations forbidding the execution of Papal grants of benefices to strangers, and ordering the officials of the various ports to arrest all persons bringing Papal Bulls into the country, and after receiving a letter from Avignon complaining of the treatment meted out to the agents of two Cardinals who had received such benefices, he wrote to Clement VI adding his protest to that of Parliament. In the following year further royal proclamations were issued against the abuse, and further Papal protests were met with the same determined front.

Edward was in an awkward position, for it was to his advantage to fight the Pope but not to alienate him. The benefices held in England by the Cardinals helped to keep a slightly Anglophilic party at the Court of Avignon, or at least so Clement argued,³ and as the Papacy still preserved some of its ancient prestige in the councils of Europe, it was well to have such support amid the advisers of a French partisan Pope. In the end, however, public opinion won the day. In 1351 a parliamentary petition resulted in the promulgation of the first Statute of Provisors, securing the rights of English patrons to present and English electors to elect to benefices and offices in their gift, and providing for the forfeiture of all preferences to which nomination was made by the Pope.⁴ This enact-

¹ Rot. Parl., ii. 144-145.

² Murimuth, 138-140, 149, Hemingburgh, ii. 401-403, Knighton, ii. 28-29, Avesbury, 229-230.

³ Letter in Walsingham, 260

⁴ Rot. Parl., ii. 228; Statutes, i. 316 318.

ment was closely followed by another, also aimed at the papacy. Parliament for some time past had been complaining of the way suitors appealed to Avignon against the judgments delivered in the civil courts,¹ and in 1353 its perseverance was rewarded by the first Statute of Præmunire, which laid under severe penalty all who were instrumental in withdrawing from the realm pleas which ought to be heard in the King's courts.² But this did not end the struggle. In 1374 an attempt was made to come to terms with the Pope, but though Benedict XI. made some concessions, and confirmed the King's presentation to benefices, and agreed not to cite any Englishman to appear personally in Rome for three years, there was no final settlement of the questions in dispute. Papal interference continued, and in 1376 the Commons, having lost all patience, presented a petition to the King which was rightly called "a bill against the Pope and the Cardinals". Clergy, they said, who should be devoted to the people's welfare, had in reality given themselves over to the twin vices of simony and greed. Vast sums of money left the country for Avignon, sent by the Papal collector who lived in regal state in London with an army of spies and servants; bishops, moved quickly from see to see, were impoverished by the firstfruits paid to Rome on each occasion, while the Cardinals battened on English benefices, showing in return intense hostility to the land whence they drew such large revenues.³

None can read the bitter words of the monkish chronicler about Papal exactions⁴ and the reiterated demands of Parliament without recognising that the Statutes of Provisors and Præmunire expressed a strong national feeling. Far from being dictated by royal influence, they were carried despite the passive resistance of Edward III., who took no pains to see that they were rigorously enforced. One other grievance against the Papacy, one, too, with which Edward could fully sympathise, lay in the constant drain of money from England to Avignon. In days of war, when every penny was wanted by the Government, in days of pestilence and murrain, when the country was impoverished, this grievance became very prominent. In 1346, therefore, Parliament had to ask that the priories alien should be taken into the King's hands. Apart from this, there were the payments direct to the Pope, and the

¹ Rot. Parl., ii. 172.

² Statutes, i. 329.

³ Rot. Parl., ii. 337-340.

⁴ "Sic semper onerata ecclesia Anglicana," Murimuth, 157-158, 173-176.

King in 1334, on hearing of the death of John XXII., ordered the Papal agents to retain the tenths and other Papal dues then in their possession, and the London authorities to seize all such moneys to be found within their jurisdiction.¹ This was but a temporary expedient, but a more successful and permanent resistance was made to the demand for the annual tribute of 1000 marks, the last remaining evidence of King John's submission to the Papacy. Since 1333 no payment had been made, and in 1366 the obligation was finally repudiated. All classes, lords temporal and spiritual, and commons, joined in supporting the King.² The nation spoke with one voice.

This last event, crowning evidence as it was to the opposition to Papal interference, was also important for the fact that it brought into prominence a man who was to have a profound effect on his age. The Oxford scholar and royal chaplain, John Wycliffe, was employed to support the policy of the Government against the few who protested in favour of the papacy.³ When and how Wycliffe first came to take a leading part against the hierarchy of the Church we cannot tell, but we know enough of his life to watch his gradual development from an opponent of prelates to an opponent of the friars, and from an opponent of friars to an opponent of orthodox theology, to watch, too, his growing anger at the ecclesiastical scandals of his age, an anger which attacked at first individuals, then the system they represented, and finally the dogma upon which that system was based. Wycliffe was by no means alone in bewailing the state of the Church. The new political literature, which sprang into being at the close of the fourteenth century, had much to say about the decay of spirituality and the failure of the clergy to set a good example to the nation. Of the various orders of clerks the parish priest was the first to feel the barbed shafts of these polemic writers. He was accused of neglecting his parish, of heaping up riches like a merchant, and trafficking in his tithe, of caring more for the pleasures of the chase than for the cue of souls, of having only three motives for taking orders, to enjoy the exemptions and privileges of the clergy, to escape hard work, and to partake of the loaves and fishes of clerical life.⁴ In the *Vision of Piers*

¹ *Foedera*, iii. 899

² *Rot. Parl.*, ii. 290.

³ "Determinatio quedam de Dominio" printed in John Lewis, *Life of Wyclif* (Oxford, 1820). Documents, No. 30, pp. 349-356.

⁴ Gower, *Vox Clamantis*, 173-178, 198.

Plowman one of these men is made to declare that he has been priest and parson for more than thirty years, and yet cannot sing his office perfectly nor read the lives of the saints, that he is a better hand at catching a hare in a field than at construing his "beatus vir," that he is a bad master and a crooked dealer.¹ Despite the rule of celibacy, there were many cases of the marriage of clerks in all but name, and it was thought an honour for a proud miller to wed the parson's daughter, who had been educated in a nunnery and was a great stickler for her social position.² The parson was generally poor. In many cases the dues and tithes of his benefice had been alienated, or were held by some pluralist whose substitute he was, and his fees were limited by a statute of 1362 to six marks a year.³ This naturally drove him to supplement his income by doubtful methods.

From the point of view of the parish one of the most disastrous practices of the priests, and one too which made them very unpopular, was their frequent non-residence. Sometimes this arose from the abuse of pluralities, but it also came from the lack of priests after the Black Death. The parson frequently abandoned his cure, with or without licence, to live in London as a chantry priest. Archbishop Sudbury was much disturbed at the way the rectors of his diocese were resident in "distant and perhaps dishonest places," while their churches were let out to farm, and their rectories were let to laymen to be converted into taverns or worse things.⁴ Any excuse was good enough for such a proceeding: many obtained permission to be non-resident on the plea of studying at the University, but in reality merely went off to enjoy themselves.⁵ But when the worst has been said, we must remember that it was on the "poore parson of a town" that Chaucer bestowed his most unstinted praise. Holy in thought and work, this learned man was "benign and wonder diligent," in preaching Christ's Gospel to his parishioners.

He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spycyd conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, but first he folwed it hinselve.⁶

The monk was not nearly so prominent in satirical poetry as

¹ Text B, pp. 80-81.

² *Canterbury Tales*, ll. 3942-3968.

³ Statutes, I. 373.

⁴ Wilkins, *Concilia*, II 120.

⁵ Gower, *Vox Clamantis*, 173-175.

⁶ *Canterbury Tales*, ll. 501-502, 525-530.

the secular priest, save when his wealth was concerned. His activity as a farmer had been decreased by the economic consequences of the Black Death, though to him we owe much of our knowledge of the period. St Albans still cherished the traditions of Matthew Paris, and kept up its reputation as a home of chroniclers, even if the literary quality of the work was small and the historical perception less sure than heretofore. Back in the reign of Edward I. the vices of the monks had come in for some chastisement, and a songster had described in a bitter satire the rule of an imaginary order of "Fair-Ease," which combined the vices of all the others,¹ but the author of the *Vision of Piers Plowman* directs no great crusade against them, though he confidently looks forward to the day when the monasteries shall be abolished. Isolated monks often appear in the stories of the time in no favourable light, and Chaucer's shipman has a tale to tell of a particularly unprincipled one, but there are few accusations of dissolute behaviour within the monasteries. The individual monk is a subject of satire, but his order as a whole generally escapes. The truth is that the monk was entirely overshadowed in this age by the friar. Energy and zeal, whether in good or bad causes, were peculiar to him, he monopolised the schools of theology and came nigh to monopolising the highest preferments of the Church. Indeed the friars' power seemed to be threatened only by the constant and fierce rivalry of the two most prominent orders, the Franciscans and Dominicans.² They came in for boundless criticism. The author of the *Vision of Piers Plowman* accused them of preaching for their own profit, and of interpreting Scripture to their own liking; indeed if Holy Church did not offer an undivided opposition to them great mischief would ensue; they were fair-weather priests, and tended the sick only while money was still procurable, and were furious if their wealthy patrons preferred the churchyard of their parish church to a last resting-place at the friary which would cost money.³ Chaucer's friar gained power over country gentlemen's wives by assuring them that his powers of absolution were greater than those of the parish priest, and by proving himself "an easy man to give penance," indeed with him a

¹ Political Songs (Camden Soc.), 137-148.

² See Peckham's attack on Kilwardby on the question of evangelical poverty in *Tractatus Tres de Pauperate* (British Soc. of Franciscan Studies), 121-147.

³ Text B, pp. 3-4, 170-171.

gift of money could condone any sin¹. To Gower friars were far worse than useless, and he particularly objected to the way they inveigled young boys to join their order.² Wycliffe, like Chaucer, laid stress on the way friars secured a large income by giving absolution to the worst reprobates in return for money,³ and his follower, the author of *Piers Plowman's Creed*, far outdid his master in his vindictive attacks, in especial accusing the friars of departing from the fundamental principle of their order by amassing wealth with which to buy bishoprics.⁴ Another Lollard went further still and declared that no home was safe from these unprincipled seducers of wives and daughters. Finally the Chronicler Walsingham repeats the charges of the satirists, adding that the term friar was synonymous with har⁵. Nevertheless, we must hesitate to accept this evidence without qualification. Nearly all the accusers were interested parties. The author of the *Vision* was a secular clerk, who hated men who surpassed him in power and undermined his influence by hearing confessions that might otherwise be made to him. Walsingham was a monk, jealous for similar reasons, the followers of Wycliffe were the sworn foes of the Mendicants, though their master had at one time declared that they were most dear to God,⁶ a piece of inconsistency which tells heavily in favour of the men whom he later attacked. Gower was too obviously bent on fault-finding to be entirely convincing, and Chaucer, like others of his age, regarded the priest as quite outside the pale of ordinary humanity, though a necessary instrument for securing salvation. Deep down in the heart of all human beings there is a desire to see the mighty fall, the professor of high ideals caught in the toils of evil.⁷ The friars were powerful, too powerful indeed, and therefore envied. That many of them had fallen away from the doctrine of apostolic poverty cannot be gainsayed, but that they were all monsters in human form is more than the judicious judge can allow. Apart from the ordinary regular and secular clergy, there were hosts of officials and clerical hangers on, who brought the Church into ill repute.

¹ Cf. also *Piers Plowman's Creed*, 467-470.

² *Vox Clamantis*, 237-238. Cf. Rot. Parl., iii. 502

³ *Select English Works of Wyclif* (Oxford, 1869-1871), iii. 394; *English Works of Wyclif* (Early Eng. Text. Soc., 1880), 181.

⁴ Pp. 467-470.

⁵ *Eulogii Contin.*, 345 Cf. *Chron. Angliae*, 116.

⁶ Walsingham, ii. 13.

⁷ Cf. Walsingham, i. 363.

At the head of this list stood the Pardoner, whose wallet was "bretful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot". By selling these to the credulous peasantry and by trafficking in spurious reliics—a pillow-case which figured as our Lady's veil, and pigs' bones in a glass as the relics of a Saint—he made more in one day than the honest parson earned in two months¹. Side by side with the Pardoner among Chaucer's pilgrims rode a Summoner, whose duty it was to summon delinquents to appear before the ecclesiastical courts, and who made a nice little income out of the sins of others, and for a consideration would wink his eye at the priest's concubine, and guaid a wrong-doer from the Archdeacon's anger.²

Though there were ardent reformers who complained of these abuses, there were few who regarded them with the horror which a later age has meted out to them. What did attract universal attention was the increasing wealth and power of the Church. It is practically impossible to estimate the exact proportion of the country's wealth in clerical hands, but Parliament believed it to be one-third of the whole, and a Wycliffite writer considered that "the more part of the temporal lordeschips" was in the hands of the Chuich.³ Early in the century Chief Justice Beresford was moved to tell the Bishop of Hereford in open court that "the men of Holy Church have a wonderful way. If they get a foot on to a man's land they will have their whole body there."⁴ After the Black Death greater opportunities arose for the acquisition of property, as the fear of death turned some men's minds towards religion, and in 1357 it was recorded that in London the property of many rich citizens, who had died of the plague, had fallen into the hands of Holy Church, and that the city had become impoverished thereby.⁵ The most disastrous aspect of the greed of the monasteries was their "appropriation" of the advowson of benefices. The parish always suffered, for the monks took their responsibilities lightly, and were content to appoint a vicar on a miserable stipend to do the work for which they diew the salary in the form of the rectorial tithes. Against such abuses Wycliffe energetically protested.

¹ *Canterbury Tales*, Prologue, ll. 686-689, 694-706.

² *Canterbury Tales*, ll. 623-668

³ Rot Parl., ii. 337, *English Works of Wyclif*, 369.

⁴ Year Book, 3 & 4 Edw. II (Selden Soc), 69.

⁵ Cal. of Letter Book G., 85.

To those who, like the author of the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, had a high conception of Holy Church, "a louche ladi of lere in lynnen yclothed," these scandals were very terrible, but the nation generally was becoming most suspicious of the lordly prelates who personified the system. Quite early in the century there had been complaints of their supineness in restraining abuses,¹ and towards the end Gower was inveighing against their pampered lives, their greed of gain, and their neglect of spiritual for temporal offices. This last accusation, in which he had the support of Wycliffe, was the first to find expression in political action. The reign of Edward II. had seen the advent of the purely political bishop. The Ortons and the Stratfords thought little or nothing of their duties as fathers in God, and very much of their power as actual or potential ministers of the Crown. Moreover, the fourteenth-century prelate was more than inclined to favour Papal interference. Winchelsey had stood for clerical independence from national control and for dependence on Rome, Stratford had openly likened himself to Thomas Becket, Kilwaikby and Peckham were inclined to support Papal aggression. Of all Churchmen the friars, strangely enough, showed the truest patriotism. When in 1374 a council of prelates and temporal lords was called by the Black Prince to consider demands for money made by the Pope, it was the representatives of the Franciscan and Austin Friars who turned the scale against the statement of Archbishop Whittlesey and the other bishops that "the Pope is lord of all, we cannot deny this," and the argument of a Durham monk that "the Pope held the two swords of the spiritual and temporal power." In no uncertain language they argued against Papal claims and compelled the Archbishop and the monk to yield a grudging acquiescence.² But these men were not officials, and it was quite natural that the growing feeling of nationality in England should begin its protest against clerical abuses by an attack on the clerical ministers of the Crown.

The idea of displacing ecclesiastics and appointing laymen in their stead to manage the affairs of the kingdom was not new. When Edward III. in his wrath had driven Stratford from office, he had been heard to swear that never again should a cleric be his treasurer or chancellor.³ For a time he had been as good as his

¹ Political Songs (Camden Soc.), 134.

² *Eulogii Contin.*, 337-339.

³ *French Chron. of London*, 86.

wold, and had appointed Sir Robert Bourchier as chancellor and Sir Robert Parning as treasurer, but within four years a cleric, in the person of John Ufford, Dean of Lincoln, had received the chancellorship, and before this another Churchman, William of Edington, had been made treasurer. At that time public opinion on the whole had supported the clerical ministers, but by 1371 there had arisen a strong party which advised the disendowment of the clergy and their removal from offices of state. Wycliffe, who represented the best side of this movement, desired that these steps should be taken in the interests of the Church, for he looked with horror on the secularisation of ecclesiastics. Others were moved by less idealistic motives, attributing the failures in France to the unfortunate ministry, and complaining that "Gentz de Seiente Esglise" could not be called to account as other men, arguments which induced the Parliament of 1371 to petition that in future only laymen should hold office under the Crown.¹ The Chancellor at the time was William of Wykeham, who had been surveyor of the works at Windsor,² and was now high in the favour of his royal master. Although the King gave an evasive reply to the petition of Parliament, he bowed to public opinion, and both his Chancellor and Treasurer resigned. The change was not altogether satisfactory from the administrative point of view, for the new ministers adopted a new form of taxation by inducing Parliament to grant £50,000 assessed at 22s 3d on each parish. This calculation was based on an estimate of nearly 45,000 parishes,³ whereas their number was less than 9000, a blunder which necessitated a hurried resummoning of Parliament.⁴

It was not to be expected that the clerical ministers would sit down quietly under their defeat. They were soon mustering their forces for an attack on their opponents, and the struggle which ensued has been recorded in the pages of a St Albans' chronicler. His account shows us that John of Gaunt was now supporting, if not leading, the anticlerical party, and was already an object of hatred to monkish writers. He was accused of the worst kind of infidelity to his two successive wives, of being a coward who in

¹ Rot. Parl., ii. 304.

² Walsingham, i. 288

³ Higden, ii. 90, estimated the number of parishes at 45,002. He was probably the authority on whom the ministers relied

⁴ Rot. Parl., ii. 304.

battle urged his men on, but never led them in person, a snivelling sinner who repented in tears but did not reform, a politician who would not hesitate to stoop to the most dishonourable devices to secure his end.¹ Unfortunately the dearth of other chronicles makes it impossible to check these accusations, which come to us more as current reports than as proved facts, or to judge how far it is true that the Black Prince threw his influence on the side of his brother's opponents.² The Prince's share in the political battle must have been passive to say the least to it. He was too ill to take any active part, often falling into a state of coma undistinguishable from death,³ and to magnify his sympathy with the clerical party into a breach with his brother seems to be unwarranted in view of the fact that he named that brother executor of his will on the day before he died. Still it is undeniable that a strong Court party had entrenched itself round the King, who was now falling into his dotage. It consisted partly of the new ministers who occupied the Chancery and Treasury, partly of the parasites of the Court, and its opportunity came when the King conceived a senile infatuation for a certain Alice Perrers, whose dominion over her admirer was obtained by a clever tongue, and, said the superstitious, by the practice of the Black Art. England had seen royal mistresses in the past, but never before one who influenced the course of justice and the government of the kingdom. The King could deny her nothing, and she was allowed to sit upon the bench and bully the judges, who feared her, it was said, more than they did the King.⁴ So established was her position that Pope Gregory XI, when seeking English support for the release of his brother, indited letters to Alice as well as to the Black Prince, John of Gaunt, and other great men of the kingdom.⁵ When the Parliament of 1376, known as the "Good Parliament," met, it was soon apparent that an opposing party, strong alike in both Houses, was bent on attacking those who controlled the King, whose constitution, undermined by past excesses, was crumbling under the influence of his latest passion. The Commons showed a cohesion and a power of organisation, such as had never been seen in previous Parliaments, for

¹ *Chron. Angliae*, 75, 136, 205, 279, 328.

² *Ibid.*, 74-75, 393, *Brut*, 330

³ *Chron. Angliae*, 89.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 95-96, 97, 98-99, *Brut*, 329-330. Cf *Rot Parl.*, II 329

⁵ *Papal Letters*, IV. 96.

they refused to grant supplies till grievances had been redressed, and proceeded to elect one of their number, Peter de la Mare, to act as their mouthpiece¹. Peter at once struck the note of remonstrance in a speech replying to the Chancellor's request for supply. He declared that it was quite impossible that the finances of the kingdom had been properly managed, else the King would not have been short of money, and that the real grievance was the lack of control over those who administered the finances of the kingdom. Duke John cannot have listened to this indictment of the Government with any pleasure, and the doctrine that lay behind it, the responsibility of ministers not only to the King but also to the Commons, naturally awoke no sympathy in his breast. He probably believed that his position and influence could smooth things down, but in spite of the Duke's graciousness, on the following day Peter de la Mare maintained his point, declaring that all the woes of the kingdom were due to the peculations and fraudulent transactions of the Court party. At once the Commons proceeded to attack the worst offenders. Lord Latimer, the King's Chamberlain, was accused of malversation and extortions which did infinite credit to his ability, and with him was associated a certain London merchant, Richard Lyons by name, who among other things had assisted him to "forestall," and consequently raise the price of, many commodities throughout the kingdom. On these grounds the Commons demanded that both should be brought to justice. In the course of discussion Lord Neville, the steward of the royal household, in an attempt to support his fellow-official, not only earned a stern rebuke from the Speaker, but was included in the indictment. Nothing could withstand the righteous indignation of the Commons. Latimer was deprived and sentenced to imprisonment and forfeiture of his goods, Lyons was sent to the Tower, two other London Aldermen, Adam de Buyl and John Pecche, were convicted of fraudulent dealings, and even Alice Perrers was compelled to retire into private life and to promise to make no attempt to reassert her influence over her lover. This last interference with the royal prerogative was the only one to which the King showed any opposition, and to such a pitch of degradation had the victor of Cręcy descended, that he was obliged to bargain with Parliament as to the fate of his mistress.²

¹ *Chron. Angliae*, 72; *Brut*, 330.

² Rot. Parl., ii. 322-330, *Chron. Angliae*, 73-100.

While Parliament was thus striving to restore order to the Court, and to remove venal officials whose influence was far more disastrous than that of any clerical ministers, the man on whose tacit support they were relying died. After many months' hopeless struggle the Black Prince finally succumbed on June 8th. John of Gaunt at once tried to get Parliament to regulate the succession in the case of the death of the child Richard of Bordeaux, the only surviving child of the Black Prince. He was most anxious to secure the acceptance of the rule which had excluded Edward III. from the French throne, for the Earl of March, the grandson of his elder brother Lionel of Clarence, stood before him in the succession were women allowed to hand on a claim to their descendants. But Parliament refused to interfere in any way, and even went so far as to suggest distrust of the honesty of the Duke's intentions by insisting that Richard should be brought into Parliament to be seen by the faithful Commons.¹ The hostility thus shown to John of Gaunt was doubtless the work of skilful organisers in the clerical party. The wildest rumours were current about him. His enemies began to declare that he was a changeling and not the son of Edward III., a type of calumny which almost invariably foreshadowed an attempt to exclude its subject from succession to the throne. The hostile chronicler had no hesitation in reporting the rumour that the uncle intended to poison his nephew, exclude the Earl of March, and himself succeed to the throne.² Lancaster's action, did nothing towards allaying these suspicions. No sooner was Parliament dissolved than he reversed all that it had done, recalled Lord Latimer and other delinquents, released Lyons from prison, and allowed Alice Perrers to reappear at Court as a means of assisting him to control the King. The Council recently established by Parliament was at once dissolved, and the unfortunate speakers Peter de la Mare, was thrown into prison. Still more pointed from the dynastic point of view was the attempt to remove the Earl of March from the country, and his dismissal from the office of Marshal. The fiercest attack was levelled at William of Wykeham, who had probably been the chief inspirer of the Good Parliament's policy. Accused of peculation and maladministration during his tenure of office, deprived of his temporalities, forbidden to come within

¹ Rot. Parl., ii. 330.² *Chron. Angliae*, 92, 107-108.

twenty miles of the Court, he was subjected to the bitterest persecution, for "they hunted the seyd bishop from place to place both by letters and by writtes, so that no man could succour him throughout his diocese, neither could he nor durst he rest in any place"¹ Such was the Duke's vengeance on the man who was said to have started the rumour that he was no true son of Edward III.²

Thus it was truly said that the King was governed "by the counsel of one man only,"³ for Lancaster was straining every nerve to strengthen his position, in view of the King's approaching death. He secured the inclusion of himself and Latimer amongst the King's executors, he won the support of Lord Percy, hitherto hostile, by appointing him to the vacant office of Marshal, and other adherents were sought by the generous gift of Wykeham's temporalities to the youthful Prince of Wales.⁴ When Parliament was summoned to meet early in 1377, the Duke so influenced the elections that only very few members who had sat in the Good Parliament were returned.⁵ Lancaster was strong enough to refuse a petition for the release of De la Mare, and to secure petitions for the restoration of Lord Latimer and Alice Perreis to the royal favour, the while advertising his loyalty by allowing the young Prince to be commissioned to open Parliament, and by inserting in the Chancellor's speech certain passages in which the virtues and loyalty of the King's sons were emphasised.

Parliamentary opposition being thus stifled, the field of battle was transferred from the Palace of Westminster to the hall of Convocation, where William Courtenay, Bishop of London, took the lead, inducing the assembled prelates to refuse to transact business till their colleague of Winchester had taken his seat. Despite the Archbishop of Canterbury's explanation that this would infringe the King's prohibition to appear within twenty miles of Court, the prelates carried the day, and showed great respect when their per-

¹ Fragment of chron among Stow's papers, printed in *Chron. Angliae*, p. lxxx. For Wykeham's trial see pp. lxxiv-lxxx. Cf. *Foedera*, iv. 12-15, *Chron. Angliae*, 106-107.

² *Chron. Angliae*, 107.

³ Sermon by the Bishop of Rochester, translated in Gasquet, *Old English Bible* (London, 1897), 78.

⁴ Richard was created Prince of Wales soon after Michaelmas, 1376 (*Brut*, 331).

⁵ *Chron. Angliae*, 112. Not the first attempt of the kind, see *Rot. Parl.*, ii. 355.

secuted brother appeared in their midst. Fired by his success, Courtenay carried the war into the enemy's camp, by attacking Wycliffe, whose advice the Duke had sought during the recent struggle¹. As the Oxford scholar already possessed a reputation as an anticlerical, his alliance with John of Gaunt shows us quite clearly how the struggle now proceeding was the direct outcome of the great fight between the two parties of 1371. The Duke, though not an anticlerical or a reformer, saw that he might make use of this earnest thinker, and as Ockham and Marsiglio of Padua had been to the Emperor Lewis, so should Wycliffe be to him. Already the Oxford scholar had a considerable following not only in his own university but in London, many citizens and lords being among his disciples, and his support was valuable to the Lancastrian party in giving it an air of respectability. His opinions, openly taught at Oxford and elsewhere, gave excuse to Courtenay to summon him to appear at St. Paul's, though the Archbishop was unwilling to take any action, as no point of strictly doctrinal heresy could be urged against him.² John of Gaunt accepted this action as a direct attack on himself and his party under the guise of ecclesiastical discipline, and to prove to the world that there was nothing anticatholic in his attitude, he briefed four friars, one from each of the mendicant orders, to defend the accused. Some doubt this fact, because the friars became Wycliffe's most serious enemies, forgetting that they did not oppose him until he had denied the doctrine of Transubstantiation. At present his quarrel with his ecclesiastical superiors centred on the extent and nature of Papal power, and the friars in England, unlike their continental fellows, were sturdily independent on this question. Not content with mere legal assistance, Lancaster with his new ally the Marshal Percy, accompanied his friend to St. Paul's to overawe the presiding prelates, on the day of trial. Percy raised some opposition by pushing through the crowds in the nave, and the bishop interfered; in the Lady Chapel the dispute was renewed over the question whether Wycliffe should stand or sit during his indictment, and finally the London crowd broke up the meeting before the trial had commenced.³

¹ *Chron. Angliae*, 115 Cf. *Devon, Issues of the Exchequer*, 200.

² *Chron. Angliae*, 117 He is accused of heresy by Walsingham, i. 324, but not by the Papal Bull of the following year.

³ *Chron. Angliae*, 118-121.

Though Wycliffe and his friends escaped in the scuffle, when next day it was rumoured that the Marshal was detaining a prisoner in his house without due cause, a mob of citizens sacked Percy's house, and then rushed to Lancaster's palace of the Savoy. Though Courtenay's intervention saved the Savoy, many of Lancaster's friends and retainers were severely handled, and only hasty flight to the Princess of Wales at Kennington saved Percy and the Duke himself. It was quite evident that the flame of anger was fanned, if not kindled, by political rivalries which dated from the previous year, since one of the first demands of the Londoners was that Wykeham and De la Mare should be given a fair trial;¹ but the great desire of those who did not lose their heads in the crisis was that peace should be patched up between the two parties. The Princess of Wales used her influence for peace, and the London authorities were quite ready to be conciliatory, though they refused to be browbeaten by Lancaster, or to renounce their opposition to his policy. Nevertheless, party strife was still running high when on June 21st Edward breathed his last.² Alice Perrers, it was said, hung on to the last, but left before death finally triumphed, having robbed the King of all she could carry down to the very rings on his fingers. Venal courtiers fled, Lancaster presumably was too busy with politics to attend his father's death-bed, only a solitary priest took pity on the once proud King and closed his dying eyes. Edward had been punished for his misdeeds to the full. He had led a life of self-indulgence rather than one of service to his subjects, though even as he lay dead men could not forget the brilliance of his early days "For as in hys bygynnyng all thynges were Joyfull an lykyng to hym and to all the peple, And in his myd age he passed all men in high Joye and worshype and blesyndesse, Ryght so, whan he diow into Age, drawyng downward thurgh lechchorye and other synnes, litill and litill all tho Jofull and blyssed thynges, good fortune and prosperite decreased and myshapped, And Infortunat thynges, and unprofytale harmes, with many eyle, bygan for to spryne, and, the more harm is, conteyned longe tyme after."³

¹ *Chron. Angliae*, 126

² Cal. of Letter Book H, 68

³ *Brut*, 334; translating the character of Edward III. in Walsingham, i. 327-328.

CHAPTER XIV

POLITICAL RIVALRIES AND THE GREAT REVOLT
(1377-1381)

THE keynote of Richard II.'s reign was struck by the chronicler's obituary notice of Edward III. "Unprofitable things continued long after" the death of the old king in 1377.

It was indeed an unenviable heritage that was handed on to the unfortunate boy of eleven. At home, political parties were at daggers drawn. Abroad, the truce with France had just expired, and the enemy was about to knock at the gate of the distracted kingdom. The impartial observer might think that before long England would be enveloped in the flames of war. One thing saved the situation. London showed her strength. By her determined attitude John of Gaunt had been checked and his aims frustrated. The citizens had evinced their belief that Richard's peaceful succession was threatened by his uncle, when just before Edward's death they had sent a deputation to the Princess of Wales at Kennington to protest their loyalty. It was not for nothing that the men of those days came to call Richard the "Londoners' King".¹ Lancaster on his side was quick to realise that conciliation was the best policy. He agreed at once to a reconciliation both with the Londoners and the Bishop of Winchester, and witnessed without protest the release of Peter de la Mare and his triumphant return to London from Nottingham. He took a prominent part as High Seneschal of England in the coronation ceremony, which was carried out on the most glorious scale, and submitted to his exclusion from the Council of Government appointed to act during the minority. In Parliament he made a solemn asseveration of his loyalty, and with scant sense of humour warned that body not to encourage anything that should disturb the peace of the country.² One small satisfac-

¹ *Chron. Angliae*, 199-200.² Rot. Parl., iii 5

tion fell to his lot. He was able to assist in the condemnation of the woman who had betrayed him,¹ when the Lords re-tried the case against Alice Perrers.

Though Parliament was quite willing to let bygones be bygones, and even appointed Lancaster on the Committee of Lords whose advice they sought, it was determined to take his warning in rather a different way to that which he intended. It insisted on remodeling the Council, removed Lord Latimer and others of Lancastrian sympathies,² and demanded that during the minority ministers should be appointed by Parliament.³ Such a demand, though revolutionary, was the natural outcome of the agitation against the King's ministers which had begun in 1371; it showed the nation's suspicion of the King's advisers, and forboded political disturbance in the future.

The problems of the day, serious enough in themselves, were complicated by the antipapal attitude of so many Englishmen. Wycliffe, as the representative of this feeling, was called upon by the Government to give an opinion as to the morality and feasibility of withholding the exportation of treasure to the Pope, as was suggested in a petition of the first Parliament of the reign. His report naturally was entirely favourable to the idea, but it went further and advised the disendowment of the Church.⁴ Such a challenge could not be expected to pass unheeded, especially as the English prelates had a weapon ready to hand in certain Papal Bulls which had been sent in the previous May to the University of Oxford and the Archbishop of Canterbury, ordering the arrest and examination of the outspoken doctor. Wycliffe had published replies to the accusation contained in these Bulls, one of which, it was said, had been laid before Parliament, and in addition had issued anonymously an open letter, in which he showed the logical absurdity of extending the Papal commission of binding and loosing to all things temporal.⁵ As he was careful not to deny to the papacy spiritual power over the Church, the University of Oxford did not hesitate to declare that, though at first his doctrines might sound unpleasant,

¹ Just before Edward's death she procured a pardon for Wykeham, in return for a heavy bribe (*Chron. Angliae*, 136-137).

² *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 6, *Chron. Angliae*, 164.

³ *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 258-271.

⁴ *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 245-257, 481-492.

they were quite true,¹ and he was therefore conscious of considerable support in the nation, when early in 1378 he appeared at Lambeth in answer to the summons of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. The respected adviser of the Government, now free from the doubtful support of John of Gaunt, he was being attacked by the bishops not on their own authority, as when he had appeared at St. Paul's, but on the strength of Papal Bulls which represented an unpopular external power. Moreover, his friends did not hesitate to champion him. The Princess of Wales sent Sir Lewis Clifford, one of her household, to forbid the condemnation of the accused, the Londoners again disturbed the proceedings, but this time in opposition to the ecclesiastical authorities, and, to the indignation of the monastic chronicler, the bishops were content to dismiss with a caution the man who was so powerfully supported.² When in the following year the Chancellor of the University of Oxford was imprisoned, for having put Wycliffe under nominal and collusive restraint on the strength of the Papal Bull against him,³ no doubt was left as to the attitude of the English Government, and it became obvious that there was an opposition to Papal interference in England quite independent of the Lancastrian party.

It was not to be expected that the prelates would make no protest, and an opportunity offered in the following August. Two squires, who had been committed to the Tower for refusal to obey a royal writ, escaped to sanctuary in Westminster Abbey. They were pursued by Sir Alan Buxhall, Lieutenant of the Tower, into the choir, where one of them, offering resistance, was slain on the altar steps. Archbishop Sudbury, stung into energy for once in his life, issued excommunications against all those who had a share in this violation of sanctuary, and Courtenay hastened to publish them at Paul's Cross. Many thought that a direct attack was being made against the Church and her privileges, and the name of the Duke of Lancaster was, quite unjustifiably, associated with the attempt. Very unwisely he signalled his return to political life by championing the cause of the guilty officials, and so risked driving the anticlerical Londoners once more to champion the ecclesiastical party, so much so that he secured that Parliament should meet

¹ *Eulogii Contin.*, 348.

² Walsingham, i. 356; *Eulogii Contin.*, 348.

³ *Eulogii Contin.*, 349.

at Gloucester, far from the interference of the "ribalds" of London as he called them.¹

There seemed at first to be every probability that the old struggle against the Court party would be resumed. There were rumours that the Duke had been guilty of peculation, and that he was about to make a determined attempt to despoil the Church. If this last intention formed part of his programme, it was never realised. He was forestalled by the Archbishop, who himself raised the question of sanctuary in Parliament. Though Wycliffe was introduced to give evidence for the anticlericals,² the discussion fizzled out, and the Government did nothing till the following year when it issued a weak little statute, which the clerical party was quite willing to accept as harmless.³

Public opinion was for the moment far more interested in the accusations brought against Lancaster of having misappropriated the moneys voted for the war, which had been handed to him, although two London merchants, Philpot and Walworth, had supervised their allocation. The Commons insisted on seeing the accounts, which were found to be in order, though a few items came in for some somewhat unfair criticism.⁴ The real cause of complaint was the entire absence of any return for the money expended. So soon as the truce expired in 1377 the war had been renewed by the French, and scarcely had Richard succeeded to the throne when Rye was sacked and burnt, and Winchelsea saved only by the energy of the Abbot of Battle. In August, 1377, an organised attack was made on the south coast. The Isle of Wight was overrun, Winchelsea was once more saved by the Abbot, but Hastings was burnt. The Yarmouth fisheries were threatened,⁵ and the London authorities, in dire fear,⁶ took elaborate precautions for the defence of the city. The coast was practically undefended. The Earl of Arundel had failed to garrison his castle at Lewes, Lancaster had been equally neglectful at Pevensey, nothing but the approach of wintry weather drove the enemy back to France.

¹ Walsingham, i. 379-380, *Vita Ricardii II*, 9. He was probably mistaken in this belief, as one of the members sent by the city to the Gloucester Parliament was John Northampton, a strong Lancastrian.

² Wycliffe's argument is to be found in his *De Ecclesia* (ed. J. Loserth, Wyclif Soc., 1886), Caps. vii.-xvi.

³ Statutes, ii 12, Walsingham, i. 391-392

⁵ *Chron. Angliae*, 151-152, 170.

⁴ Rot. Parl., iii 7, 35-36.

⁶ Cal. of Letter Book H., 64-66.

Meanwhile, in Aquitaine things had been going badly for the English. Sir Thomas Felton, who was in command there, was captured in an attempt to relieve Bergerac, and the sphere of English influence was reduced practically to two small districts round Bordeaux and Bayonne. Something, however, was done by way of strengthening the defences. Some of the money voted in the first Parliament of the reign was devoted to the repair of fortresses both at home and abroad,¹ but an idea of the terror with which the Government was inspired may be gathered from the appeal sent to such an inland town as Oxford to strengthen its fortifications in view of French invasion.² There were some attempts to take the offensive. A fleet sent to attack the Spaniards at Sluys was dispersed by a storm, but Sir Hugh Calverley led a successful raid round Bayonne, and at the beginning of 1378 several small raids and sea exploits were successfully carried out. The Duke of Lancaster was commissioned to take command at sea, but his departure was delayed by the necessity to garrison Cherbourg, surrendered to the English by Charles of Navarre in return for help against the French King.³ The delay was serious, and that enterprising Londoner, John Philpot, took matters into his own hands, equipped a fleet at his own expense, and to the intense indignation of the Government captured a pirate who was preying on English shipping.⁴ When Lancaster at last did set sail, he accomplished nothing. Landing in Brittany, he failed before St. Malo, and while he was thus engaged, the French slipped across to burn Fowey and other towns in Cornwall. The war continued intermittently through 1378, 1379, and 1380. It was mainly a story of reprisals at sea, first one side and then the other gaining an advantage. The most useful event for the English was the revolt of Brittany in 1378 and the return of their old ally John de Montfort to his duchy in 1379. The English again made alliance with the Duke, to whose assistance they sent an expedition under Sir John Arundel, notable mainly for the disgraceful behaviour of the soldiers, of whom the greater part, with the admiral himself, perished in a dreadful storm.⁵ Equally useless was an expedition

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 36

² February 20th, 1378, Foedera, iv. 30

³ Chron. Angliae, 201, Chron. des Quatre Premiers Valois, 265, Froissart, ix. 55, 61-62.

⁴ Chron. Angliae, 198-200.

⁵ Ibid., 247-254.

to Northern France led by Thomas of Woodstock, Earl of Buckingham, the King's youngest uncle. Finding that the Duke of Brittany was inclined to come to terms with Charles VI, who at this juncture succeeded to the French throne, he was compelled to return to England. In 1381 another of the King's uncles, the Earl of Cambridge, was despatched to Spain to attack Castile in conjunction with the King of Portugal,¹ but these isolated expeditions abroad were but the expression of inefficient government at home. Harassed every year by the Scots on the northern border, quite incapable of striking a telling blow at France, there was no alternative for wise rulers but peace. The Commons had told the King long since that they could not provide money for the war,² but the Government continued its policy of wasting money in pinpricks, regardless of the fact that the ever-increasing burden of taxation was laying just that last burden on the English poor, which would provoke them to avenge their economic wrongs.

Unfortunately for the kingdom the control of taxation was being captured by the House of Commons, which was quite ignorant of finance. It had imagined in 1377 that a little good management on the part of ministers would enable the King to "live of his own," in other words to dispense with taxation, and provide for all the exigencies of Government at home and the war abroad out of his hereditary income. Far from this being the case annual supplies had been voted ever since, and even then the Government found it necessary to borrow from London,³ and in desperation even entertained the mad idea of raising a revenue from Ireland.⁴ When Parliament met at Northampton in November, 1380, the Chancellor informed the Commons that at least £160,000 would have to be provided. At first it was thought impossible to obtain such a sum, but, after a lengthy discussion, it was decided that two-thirds of it should be raised by a poll-tax, if the clergy would provide the balance.⁵ Twice before such a tax had been levied. In 1377 all adults had paid one groat (4d); in 1379 the scale had ranged from 10 marks paid by the Duke of Lancaster to a groat by the poorest, and had even then been condemned as falling too heavily on those

¹ *Chron. Angliae*, 284-285, Ayala, II. 151, Foedera, IV. 94.

² Rot. Parl., III. 35.

³ Cal. of Letter Book H., 119-121, 149.

⁴ Foedera, IV. 22.

⁵ Rot. Parl., III. 89-90.

least able to pay, but now every individual over the age of fifteen was obliged to pay three groats, though each district was to assess the tax so that the rich assisted the poor, so long as no married couple paid more than £1 or less than 4d.¹ This arrangement threw all the work and onus of assessment on the local authorities, a clumsy attempt on the part of the Government to evade responsibility, but it was worse than clumsy, it was unfair. In districts where no rich lived the unfortunate peasant and his wife were obliged to pay the full shilling, and the inevitable result was systematic evasion. Even London, by far the wealthiest community in the kingdom, was guilty of faked returns, and on March 13th, 1381, orders were issued to the Aldermen to revise the rolls by a house-to-house visitation,² similar orders to fifteen counties following three days later. It is evident from such returns as survive, that by suppressing the names of all female dependents other than wives, different districts returned figures that were understated from 20 to 50 per cent.³

The poll-tax of 1380-1381 was no mere blunder, it was a deliberate attempt to extend taxation to all ranks of society, since it was said "that all the wealth of the kingdom was in the hands of artisans and labourers".⁴ There at a glance the chronicler reveals the clashing of classes, and the elements of social disturbance. The Middle Ages were breaking up before the spirit of competition, and many did not like it. The governing classes objected very strongly to the way men were now anxious to better their position.⁵ Men were forbidden by statute to ape their betters' clothes,⁶ the price of cloth for servants' dress was strictly limited,⁷ "common lewd women" were not to dress like "good noble dames and damsels" but were to be clothed so that "all folks may have knowledge of what rank they are".⁸ The desire to divide class from class was apparent in almost every branch of social life, and at the same time each class was itself becoming more estranged from the other. Even the Wycliffite author of *Piers Plowman's Creed* had no sympathy with

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 90, *Chron. Angliae*, 281; Knighton Contin., 129-130, *Vita Ricardii II.*, 22.

² Cal. of Letter Book H., 163

³ Professor Oman has analysed the returns in his *Great Revolt*, 27-29, and has given details of a typical Hundred in Appendix, iii. 167-182

⁴ *Eulogia Contin.*, 345.

⁵ Higden, ii. 168, 170

⁶ Statutes, i. 381.

⁷ Rot. Parl., ii. 281.

⁸ *Memorials of London*, 267

the man who made his way in the world Every cobbler's son or beggar's brat turns writer or abbot, and lords' sons have to cringe to him Lords should make gentlemen bishops, and set these scamps to clean ditches and eat beans and bacon-rind instead of peacocks and other delicacies¹

This strong class feeling had been growing ever since the Black Death, which had had a far-reaching effect on the economic position of the country The first immediate effect had been to cheapen all commodities, for there were few to buy, but when existing supplies were exhausted, labourers could not be found to gather the plentiful harvest of 1349, and the corn was left to rot in the fields.² "So great was the want of labourers and workmen of every art and mystery, that a third part and more of the land throughout the entire kingdom remained uncultivated, labourers and skilled workmen became so rebellious that neither the King nor the law nor the justices, the guardians of the law, were able to punish them."³ They began to demand higher wages, and at the same time prices rose rapidly, for the demand in both cases became greater than the supply The rise in prices, and perhaps in wages, had begun before the Black Death, but the sudden diminution of the population turned a gradual evolution into a crisis. The Government at once intervened, by issuing the famous ordinance for the regulation of wages, which by the confirmation of Parliament in the following year became the Statute of Labourers All unemployed persons of both sexes under the age of sixty were compelled, under pain of imprisonment, to accept any work offered to them at the wages current in 1346, or six years previously, and those who had employment were not to throw it up before their term of service expired, on the plea that they now should draw more wages. On the other hand, all who paid wages above this rate were to forfeit a large sum to whomsoever informed against them At the same time victuallers were ordered to charge reasonable sums for their wares, and the giving of alms to an able-bodied beggar was forbidden⁴ There was nothing revolutionary or unexpected in this enactment It was the custom to control all kinds of prices and wages, for competition was not understood, and where it existed was looked at

¹ *Piers Plowman's Creed*, 494-496.

² *Knighton Contin.*, 62

³ *Registrum Roffense* in Cotton MS, Faust. B., v., f. 98 vo.

⁴ *Foedera*, iii. 198-199; *Statutes*, i. 307-308, 311-313.

askance. The municipalities were always on the watch to prevent any rise in price, and one of the chief cares of the guilds was to limit wages¹. Thus the Statute was aimed as much at the capitalist as at the labourer, and the records of the enforcement of the Statute betray an honest desire to prevent any marked increase in food prices, though the wording of this part of the enactment was too vague to be really effective. The most serious criticism of the measure is that wages were fixed at too low a rate in view of their tendency to rise quite apart from the Black Death.

Honest in intention though the Statute of Labourers may have been, it was considered a grievance from the outset. "Workmen were so elated and contentious that they would not obey the King's edict, but if anyone had need of them, he had to give them what they wanted, his alternative being to lose his crops or to yield to their cupidity. When this became known to the King, he imposed great fines upon abbots, priors, the greater and lesser lords and landed gentry. . . . The King also arrested the workmen, and cast them into prison, but many escaped to the woods and forests for a time"². Special justices were appointed, and during the first ten years following the Black Death vigorous attempts were made to secure obedience to the law. But the work was arduous, as the long list of fines under the Act returned by London in 1359 testifies³. As time went on probably the Justices relaxed their efforts, seeing the hopelessness of the contest. Not so Parliament, which in 1361 gave its approval to a statute allowing any labourer who left his home to seek higher wages to be branded with the letter F on his forehead as a sign of falsehood, and in 1372 complained of the way labourers passed from place to place in search for higher wages, and "are so warmly received in strange places suddenly into service, that this reception gives example and comfort to all servants, as soon as they are displeased with anything, to run from master to master into strange places". The employers indeed were in the power of their men, for if they complained of the quality of the work or threatened to pay the scale wage, they were left stranded.⁴ In the towns the artisan was even more exigent than his less skilled fellows in the country. In 1378 the Mayor and Aldermen of London found it

¹ See e.g., *Little Red Book of Bristol* (London, 1900), ii. 12.

² Knighton Contin., 63-64

³ Cal. of Letter Book G, 115-118.

⁴ Statutes, i. 366-367, Rot. Parl., ii. 312, 340.

necessary to lay down a very definite scale of wages, since workmen continued to make excessive charges, and other necessaries had for long continued at the same price.¹ It was the new idea wairing with the old, competition ousting regulation, the individual asserting himself against the state. A phase of national development was evolving, despite the restrictions imposed by those in power. An exodus from the country was reinforcing the towns, and, despite ordinances and justices of labour, the rate of wages was about doubled. Regulation may have succeeded in limiting, though it could not prevent, the rise of wages, but the achievement only produced much ill-feeling between class and class. Though the employer was frequently as anxious as the labourer to evade the law, yet the latter felt that the governing classes were trying to grind him down for their own ends, "and thanne curseth he the Kynge, and al his conseille after, suche lawes to loke laboreres to greue".²

Apart from the question of wages, there were other economic grievances. In the country districts the most grievous burden was villeinage, which was still very prevalent, though on the decline. It is true that serfs were manumitted from time to time throughout the fourteenth century, sometimes to the advantage of the tenant but sometimes also for the lord's relief;³ but many left their homes, and fled to towns where they were lost in the crowd or in due course became freemen of the city. The London authorities had to protect themselves by laying down a rule that no outsider should be enrolled as a freeman, or even as an apprentice, unless he took an oath that he was no serf,⁴ and as often as not the escaped villein's lot was very hard.

The obligations of villeinage were often very heavy, though by the fourteenth century they had been reduced to very definite terms, and the old state of uncertainty as to how and when the serf would be called on to work or pay had passed.⁵ In addition to the rent in service, in kind, or in money which he had to pay, the villein could not give his daughter in marriage without leave, and if a woman without parents married without licence, she was deprived

¹ Cal. of Letter Book H, 110-111.

² *Vision of Piers Plowman*, Text B, Passus vi, ll. 318-319.

³ See e.g. *Episcopal Registers of Exeter* (ed. Randolph), *Grandison Reg.*, Pt. II p. 1159

⁴ *Liber Albus in Monimenta Gildhallæ Lond.*, i 452.

⁵ See an instance in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xv. 22.

of her inheritance. The lord could often decide the kind of work his villein should perform, whether as a farmer on a portion of the manor, or as a carpenter or labourer on the demesne or home farm, or as an independent worker with permission to leave the manor; he could also refuse permission for the education of a son¹. In the hands of a good landlord such limitations would not be arduous, but Chaucer's Parson has a tale to tell of the avaricious man, who harried his tenants with "tallages, customs and carriages," extracted amercements, which should more properly be called extortions, on the ground that all the villein's goods belonged to his lord.² The duty of doing so many days' work on the lord's demense was beginning to be commuted for money payments at the beginning of the century, and after the Black Death this probably increased, since lords began to lease their home farms when the difficulty of getting labourers increased. The serf therefore ceased to be so valuable an asset as formerly, and was regarded more as a source of income from his dues than an instrument of cultivation. Moreover, since these dues were payable wherever the villein might live, he was sometimes allowed to leave the manor and seek work where he would on the payment of an annual sum.³ But this never became a common practice, and the villein's chief grievance still was his inability to pass freely from place to place.

The fundamental reason for the agrarian discontent, which increased as the fourteenth century drew to its close, was that both landlord and tenant were totally incapable of understanding the economic conditions of the time. When the plague broke out, the former in many instances did his best, according to his lights, to tide over the difficulty. He remitted the rents of his tenants for one, two, or three years, and we are explicitly told that far from insisting on his villeins fulfilling the whole of their service, he even remitted their dues, or exacted them leniently.⁴ But the system was at fault. The increase in trade and the development in manufacture demanded that the population should be more fluid than in the past. The villein, too, was becoming conscious of his in-

¹ See analysis of the records of the manor of Chatham Hall in Essex, *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xx. 480-483.

² *Canterbury Tales*, "Parson's Tale".

³ E.g. Forcett Manor, *Royal Hist. Soc. Transactions*, New Series, xiv. 129-130.

⁴ *Knighton Contin.*, 65.

dividuality, the personal tie to his lord was weakening, he must have more scope for expansion. The Black Death, though it did not create this problem, brought it to the front. Again and again attempts were made to circumvent the landlords. In 1377 Parliament was alarmed lest the villeins should rise against their lords, as they had lately done in France, and a statute was issued against those who had organised themselves against the payment of their dues, and had appealed to Domesday Book to prove their claims,¹ while from other sources we know how they "confederated themselves in various conventicles and took a mutual oath to resist" the enforcements of their lord's privileges. But the villein was only one element in the discontent of the agrarian districts. The free tenant was to be found later among the malcontents, and the landless labourer helped to swell the ranks of the disaffected. The latter enjoyed a position of comparative independence, had it not been for the Statute of Labourers he would have been in a position to dictate terms to all and sundry, and even as it was he made his power felt. He was no longer content to dine on stale vegetables or bacon, and penny ale was not good enough for him, he must have fresh meat or fish well fried or baked, and unless he were highly paid he would grumble and complain.² It was this type of man, able to roam the country, who if he often escaped the justices of labour, hated at the same time the law that he had to circumvent.

In the towns the grievances were very varied and were not always strictly economic. Thus in some places the townsmen desired municipal liberty. At St. Albans the crisis of 1381 was but the climax of a long struggle between the town and the Abbey, the insurgents demanding rights of pasturage on the waste, and of hunting and fishing in the woods and rivers, the abolition of the seigniorial mill, in fact the removal of all manorial disabilities.³ At the neighbouring town of Dunstable the demands were very similar,⁴ while the Bury monks were forced to surrender their deeds and promise a new charter of liberties to the townsmen. In other towns the non-governing classes were arrayed against the oligarchy which monopolised the municipal privileges. This was apparently the

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 21, Statutes, ii. 2-3.

² *Vision of Piers Plowman*, Text B, Passus, vi, ll. 309-316. Cf. *Vox Clamantis*, 266-270.

³ *Gesta Abbatum S. Albani*, iii 318-320.

⁴ *Dunstable Annales*, App. 417-418.

case at Winchester, where the rebels condemned for participation in the social rebellion of 1381 were drawn with one exception from the tradesmen and artisan classes ; it was certainly so at Beverley. Some such feeling there may have been in London, since there all but the "better classes of citizens" had been excluded from municipal elections in 1346,¹ but in the capital there were many other grievances, such as could only appear in large towns where the organisation of trade had been carried far. It is here that we encounter the first definite clash of employer and employed. In the past craftsmen and apprentices had been sure to become independent master-workmen themselves, but by the second half of the fourteenth century there was a regular class of artisans in London, who were the employees of wealthy men, with no prospect of rising to a position of independence. The appearance of the new phenomenon of employer and employed naturally led to an equally new development in the "covies," or associations of artisans, who banded themselves together to keep up wages, and thus formed what may be termed the first trades-unions.² But besides the discontent of these skilled artisans, there was the mass of the poor folk of London, men who had drifted into London from the country and were ever ready to join an attack on any vested interest—in other words, the ever-changeable mob. Among other less important causes of urban discontent there was the hatred of the foreigner, nowhere more noticeable than in London. When rebellion actually broke out, the long pent-up feelings against foreigners, especially the Flemings, found expression in their systematic murder, not only in London but also in Essex, in Lynn, and in Yarmouth. To add to all the various grievances of various classes there was great political discontent—the unsuccess of the war, bad government at home, suspicions of John of Gaunt, the hatred felt for the rich men who had been robbing the kingdom. Some, more farseeing than their fellows, had long since realised the danger. More particularly the Bishop of Rochester had warned his hearers in a sermon preached at Richard's coronation ceremonies that political strife was likely to stir up the ill-feeling which already existed between class and class. He had urged the governing classes not to

¹ Cal. of Letter Book F., 304, confirmed in 1370, Cal. of Letter Book G., 265-266.

² Statutes, i. 367.

oppress the people nor wring money from them without cause.¹ But his warning fell on deaf ears. The poll-tax lit the tinder of political and economic discontent.

The first overt signs of the great revolt, which resulted, occurred in Essex on May 30th, 1381, when one of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the evasions of the poll-tax was driven away by the men of Fobbing. The arrival of Robert Belknap, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, a few days later, to punish this contempt of the law, turned riot into rebellion, and the first blood was shed.² Meanwhile, similar outbreaks occurred in Kent, where Wat Tyler suddenly appeared to lead and give cohesion to the rising.³ The history of this strenuous personage is lost in obscurity. Some said that he had been a highwayman—others that he was a disbanded soldier from the French wars. If Tyler was the right hand of the Kentish rising, its voice was the “Mad Priest” John Ball, whose apocalyptic harangues about the time when there should be neither rich nor poor resounded through the camp. Communication between the two disaffected districts having been established, the rebels advanced on London. On the evening of June 12th the men of Kent were encamped at Blackheath, those of Essex at Mile End, and there were great prospects of a discontented party within the city making common cause with the insurgents, as a Londoner, Thomas Faringdon, had helped to stir up Essex to revolt.⁴ A great fear seemed to have fallen on the Government. In the city, the Mayor, Walworth, was a strong man ready to take strong action, but he could not command the obedience of his subordinates, and at least three aldermen showed sympathy with the rebels. On the afternoon of June 13th one of these, Walter Sibley, betrayed the Bridge Gate, while another, William Tonge, threw open Aldgate, and London was in the hands of the mob. At first the rebels showed a certain amount of

¹ *Chron. Angliae*, 162-163.

² Document in *Essex Archaeological Society's Transactions*, New Series, i. 218-219. *Anominal Chronicle*, 187-188. This little work is a graphic description of the rebellion from the pen of one who witnessed certain phases of the revolt. It is printed in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, vol. xiii and translated in Professor Oman's *Great Revolt*, Appendix v., from which last it is here cited.

³ Dr. Brie in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xx 106-111, argues, not very convincingly, that Tyler and Jack Straw were the same person.

⁴ Report of London sheriffs in Réville, *Soulèvement des Travailleurs*, 194.

discipline, they attacked their enemies and burnt their houses but did not steal. John of Gaunt's palace of the Savoy, the Temple, home of lawyers hated at all times and now identified with the enforcement of the Statute of Labourers, the Priory of St John's, Clerkenwell, of which Hales, the Treasurer and Collector of the poll-tax, was Prior, were attacked in turn. Death to John of Gaunt, Chancellor Sudbury, and Treasurer Hales was the cry, though the first was safe on the borders of Scotland, and the last two were behind the stout walls of the Tower. The spirit of rebellion was spreading. Hertfordshire was in arms and ready to co-operate with the London insurgents. Would the Government fight or parley? The trembling Council, assembled in the Tower, decided to open negotiations with the rebel leader, and an interview between the King and his revolted subjects was arranged for June 14th at Mile End. Thither came all the rebels, with even a contingent just arrived from St. Albans, and received the royal promise that their demands should be conceded. Serfdom and all feudal service were to be abolished, villeins becoming free tenants paying fourpence an acre for their holdings; market monopolies and all other restrictions on buying and selling were to cease, and the rebels were to receive free pardons. Only to the demand for the execution of all "traitors" was an evasive reply given, but this mattered little to the rebels, for during the conference Tyler and Faringdon got into the Tower, and when the King reached Aldgate on his return journey, he learnt that the heads of Archbishop Sudbury, the Treasurer Hales, and one or two less important "traitors" were being paraded on pikes through the streets of the city. Henceforth the rebellion became a massacre. The more honest portion of the insurgents went home in the belief that their demands were granted, but many thousands stayed to terrorise the Londoners. The horrors of that Friday night and the dramatic incidents of Saturday are well known. How the young King, still undaunted, faced the rebels once more at Smithfield, how the insolence and aggressive behaviour of Tyler procured his death at the hands of Walworth, how the Londoners, now thoroughly alarmed at a rebellion which some of them had thought might be a useful assistance to their political party, mustered in strength, surrounded the rebels in Clerkenwell fields and carried off Richard in triumph to his mother, are written on the few pages of English history with which all are acquainted.

The rebellion in London was at an end, and though it might continue in other parts of the country, it was there too doomed to failure. In East Anglia the standard of rebellion had been raised just when the Kentish and Essex men were approaching London. John Wraw, a turbulent priest, made his head-quarters at Bury, where he was triumphing in the death of the Prior of the monastery, Chief Justice Cavendish, and other notables, while Tyler was being struck down in Smithfield. Geoffrey Litster, a dyer, entered Norwich two days later with a great following, and there established himself in royal state, while his followers acclaimed him "King of the Commons". In Cambridgeshire the rebels rose on June 14th, but here they were less violent than their fellows, though their depredations were fairly extensive. In Cambridge itself the University suffered heavily, and across the border at Peterborough the Abbey was attacked. At St. Albans William Grindcob, the most attractive character amongst all the leaders, led the tenants of the Abbey to demand concessions. Outside these districts there were none in which disaffection was universal, and though southwards at Winchester and northwards at York, Scarborough, and Beverley there were disturbances on a small scale, they had only a slight connection with the urban or the agrarian unrest. Leicester had a period of fearful anxiety when it was reported that the London rebels were approaching the town, but the commons did not rise. On the whole, the movement collapsed much more quickly than might have been expected. After a short period of martial law, special courts sat for the trial of offenders, and on the whole, despite the remarks of some chroniclers, the Government was not vindictive,¹ in fact some suspected the boy-King of sympathy with the rebels, and the report had to be officially denied.²

When Parliament met on November 13th, 1381, the nightmare so graphically described by Gower, had passed. All that remained to do was to perform the obsequies of the movement. Lords and Commons had but one opinion on the revolt on its social side.

¹ The story of the revolt and its suppression is given with varying detail by the *Anominal Chronicle*, *Chron. Angliae*, 285-326, Knighton Contin., 131-144, *Elogi Contin.*, 351-355, Malverne in Higden, ix. 1-9; *Vita Ricardii ii.*, 23-33. Much information is given by the documents printed both in the text and in the Appendix to Réville, *Soulèvement des Travailleurs*. Professor Oman's *Great Revolt* is the most complete modern account.

² Walsingham, ii. 16-17; Foedera, iv. 125.

Sir Hugh Segrave, the newly appointed Treasurer, explained the situation to them, telling them that the charters of universal manumission granted at Mile End had been revoked by the King, but that if any lords wished to emancipate their villeins the Government was quite ready to give its sanction. At once Lords and Commons declared themselves willing to die rather than surrender their rights. They believed that the real cause of the rebellion was political, that the abuses of the administration and of the household were responsible for all the discontent, and they proposed a scheme for its reform.¹ Fear of John of Gaunt may have inspired these proceedings, though it does not appear in the parliamentary records, since the Duke was placed on the committee for the reform of the household. Though Parliament showed its hostility to the social programme of the insurgents, and was ready to support those who had assisted unofficially in putting down the revolt, it asked the King to restore peace by an act of oblivion.² Subsequent Parliaments begged for a still greater extension of the King's clemency, and showed a strong desire to wipe out the recollection of this disastrous upheaval, though so far from desiring the removal of its legislative causes they re-enacted them. Thus in 1388, in the Parliament that met at Cambridge, there was promulgated a statute which ordered that no servant should pass from one Hundred to another without a warrant under the King's seal, drew up a scale of wages exacting penalties from all those who exceeded it, and enforced the Statute of Labourers in every particular.³ Throughout the reign of Richard II there were many isolated risings similar in spirit. Norfolk was about to revolt in 1382, when a plot of considerable magnitude was nipped in the bud.⁴ In 1383 the Earl of Arundel's Castle of Lewes was entered by Sussex insurgents, who destroyed his rolls, rentals, and other muniments. In 1390 a conjuration of artisans was only prevented from becoming an insurrection by stern repression.⁵ In the face of such evidence it is impossible to believe that landowners and territorial magnates realised their danger, or their obligations, and began to emancipate serfs wholesale, as some have argued. As a matter of fact the manorial rolls and other records destroyed by the rebels were redrawn as exactly as

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 100-102.

² *Ibid.*, 100

³ Statutes, ii. 56-58.

⁴ *Chron. Angliae*, 354.

⁵ Malverne in Higden, ix. 220.

possible and accepted as valid evidence, and in some cases disused rights were revived, and the serf's bondage was more firmly fixed.¹ Villeinage it is true was dying, but the process was brought about not so much by acts of rebellion as by economic pressure. But the rebellion was not without its effect: it coloured the whole reign, and aggravated the problems of the young King. England, enervated by luxury, beaten abroad, distracted at home, needed a strong ruler, one who had complete command of his passions, stern and unbending, the chastiser of sedition and the repressor of selfish ambitions. What chance had the son of the Black Prince and the grandson of Edward III. of being such a man?

¹ See Powell, *East Anglian Rising*, 64-65.

CHAPTER XV

THE CROWN AND THE LORDS APPELLANT
(1381-1389)

THE rising of 1381 might have been expected to allay political rivalries under a common fear, but suspicion and distrust were still prevalent. Even the marriage of the young King to Anne of Bohemia, sister to Wenzel the Emperor elect, early in 1382, was treated as a political matter, some being found to declare that the bride had been bought for the King at too great a price,¹ and the Court remained the centre of all kinds of intrigues. The magnates were anxious to dominate the King and to control the kingdom through him, and to this end induced Parliament to sanction the continuance of his period of tutelage, by appointing the Earl of Arundel and Michael Lord de la Pole to be his "governors and counsellors". Not till 1383, when he asserted his full independence, is it possible to decide who controlled the Government, though it seems probable that no individual or party enjoyed undisputed sway.

This perhaps explains the escape of Wycliffe from the attack directed against him in 1382, now that he had definitely embarked upon heretical opinions, especially about the Sacrament of the Altar.² His horror of materialism, or what might degenerate into that, his dislike of the self-exaltation of priests and of their office by the claim that they "made God," led him to question the doctrine of Transubstantiation, for he believed that the minds of the ignorant were diverted from the worship of their Creator by the belief that in the host He was revealed in corporeal form. Already in 1381, when condemned by the Chancellor of the University of Oxford for teaching such doctrines, he had appealed to the King,

¹ Malverne in Higden, ix. 11-12; Walsingham, ii. 46.² *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 104-105.

and when advised by John of Gaunt to abandon his position he had refused and published a further confession of faith.¹ His position in 1382 was complicated by the fact that many believed that his followers had helped to stir up the late rebellion. Parliament declared that it had been fostered by wandering preachers, who according to an orthodox versifier were Lollards, tares which smothered a fair vineyard.² It was said that John Ball, who played an important part in the Kentish revolt, taught "the perverse doctrines of Wycliffe".³ There is not, however, sufficient evidence to prove any real bond between the reformer and the rebels, for though he undoubtedly sent out preachers to popularise his doctrines, there is no record of this earlier than 1382, and John Ball was in no sense his follower, but rather his forerunner. As far back as 1366 "the mad priest of Kent" had been cited before the ecclesiastical courts,⁴ and he had been preaching for twenty years or more in 1381.⁵ Nevertheless, there was much in the political teaching of the poor priests who encouraged the rebellion which was akin to Wycliffe's ideas. The disestablishment programme of Wat Tyler, and Jack Straw's avowed desire to abolish all ecclesiastics save the friars,⁶ are reminiscent of the campaign against clerical wealth, and Wycliffe had expounded a doctrine of extreme communism in his *De Civilis Dominio*. Though he qualified this almost in the same breath, it was only to be expected that the unlettered would grasp the theory and miss its modification. When Ball preached on the text

Whan Adam dalf, and Eve span,
Wo was thanne a gentilman?

he was but translating into popular language what many quite honestly believed to be Wycliffite principles.

Still Wycliffe was so strongly supported, that in 1382 he courted inquiry into his doctrines by laying seven propositions before the Lords in Parliament, presumably to secure their sanction, and the Commons requested Archbishop Courtenay, Wycliffe's old foe, to summon a Council to settle the question of heresy. The result

¹ *Fasciculi Zamororum*, 109-132.

² Political Songs (Rolls Series), i. 231-249.

³ Walsingham, ii. 32.

⁴ Wilkins, *Concilia*, iii. 64-65.

⁵ Walsingham, ii. 32.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

was only to be expected. Despite an earthquake, which disturbed the sessions of this Council when it met in May, and which was naturally hailed by the Wycliffites as a sign of divine intervention in their favour, Wycliffe was found guilty of no less than ten heresies and fourteen errors.¹ The struggle was now transferred to Oxford, where the reformers were strongest; the Chancellor was by no means willing to welcome the intervention of an outside authority, be it bishop or archbishop, in University affairs, but in the end the Council, which went on sitting from time to time at the Blackfriars in London, triumphed, and found three Wycliffites, or Lollards as they were now more usually called, Nicholas of Hereford, Philip Repingdon, and John Ashton guilty of heresy. Of these Ashton and Repingdon ultimately made their submission, while Hereford, who appealed to Rome, was condemned to imprisonment for life.² It seems abundantly clear that the struggle between orthodoxy and heresy was much interwoven with party politics. Many prominent persons, including Sir Thomas Latimer, Sir John Trussel, Sir Lewis Clifford, Sir John Pecche, Sir Richard Stury, Sir Reginald de Hilton, Sir John Montague, and several greater magnates took up the Lollard cause,³ and Lancaster was still not unwilling to use it for his own ends. When the friars were attacked in Oxford, they begged him to interfere in their favour, and it was to him that Hereford and Repingdon appealed when they were suspended. These appeals were unheeded,⁴ but on other occasions he was more ready to interfere. He sheltered a certain Lollard, William de Swyndbury, against both the hostility of the women, who objected to his sermons exposing their frailties, and the prosecutions of the Bishop of Lincoln.⁵ Even Wycliffe, despite his refusal to accept his patron's advice, was not abandoned, and it was doubtless due to the Duke that while the Lollards were persecuted, their leader was allowed to end his days in peace. The Lollards indeed were a power that repaid consideration. The Leicestershire chronicler is very voluble about their activity in his district, and in London and Bristol they were also very prominent.

Division was equally noticeable on the question of England's

¹ Walsingham, ii. 50-52, 57-59, *Fasciculus Zizaniorum*, 272-282; Knighton Contin., 156-157.

² Hereford also recanted his heresy later.

³ Knighton Contin., 180-181; Walsingham, ii. 216.

⁴ *Fasciculus Zizaniorum*, 292-295, 318. ⁵ Knighton Contin., 189-190, 192-193.

sad heritage of war. Enemies appeared on every side. The Scots were menacing the Border, for the prolongation of the truce, secured by Lancaster in 1380-1381, had only given temporary relief; the French were assuming a threatening attitude, and the Castilian fleet was at their service. The King was anxious to take the field in person against France;¹ Lancaster too laid before Parliament a scheme for the conquest of Castile,² for "Monseigneur d'Espagne," as he loved to call himself, never forgot his claim to the Castilian crown, derived from his wife, the daughter of Pedro the Cruel, and always imagined that his own aggrandisement was the cause of greatest advantage to the nation; lastly, the Flemings, who were once more in rebellion against their Count and the King of France under the leadership of Philip, the heir of the old James of Artevelde, sent an embassy to ask for English aid.³ The matter was settled in October by Parliament, which, despite past hesitation to support Lancaster's scheme, sanctioned an expedition to Spain,⁴ only to find that the King of Portugal, whose assistance had been counted on, had made terms with the enemy, and that the small English force under Cambridge, already in the Peninsula, was about to be sent home. The supporters of the Flemish enterprise fared better. A leader was ready to hand in Despenser, Bishop of Norwich, who had obtained a Bull from Urban VI. empowering him to lead a crusade into France, to attack the supporters of the rival Pope, Clement VII. The nation was only too pleased to find that the papacy could be made useful for national ends, and in return for indulgences, thousands subscribed towards the expenses.⁵ When, however, the Bishop sailed for Calais in April, 1383, it was too late to co-operate with the revolted Flemings, who had been defeated, and their leader Van Artevelde slain, near Roosebeke.⁶ Only Ghent held out. The motley band of crusaders entered Flemish territory, and with hideous cruelties and excesses made their way to Ypres, their commander in the pride of his heart dubbing himself "Conqueror of West Flanders". His triumph was short lived, for he was compelled to withdraw before an army led by Charles VI, and by the end of September the crusade was over. This fiasco

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 122.

² *Ibid.*, iii. 114

³ The Flemish troubles first broke out in 1379.

⁴ Rot. Parl., iii. 114, 136-137.

⁵ Walsingham, ii. 71-77, 85, Knighton Contin., 198-199.

⁶ *Histoire et Chroniques de Flandres*, ii. 180-181.

might have been merely absurd, but the folly of the Bishop and the lack of principle which characterised many of his followers made it a scandal. When Parliament met, Despenser and his associates found themselves on their defence for their recent conduct. Wycliffe had cried out against the crusade from the beginning,¹ and Lancaster, whose party had done its utmost to throw discredit on the Bishop before he started, now took the lead in attacking him and, through him, the Government.² Despenser was condemned to the loss of his temporalities for incapacity, and certain of his captains, who had shown a greater desire for gain than fidelity to the standard under which they served, were heavily fined.³

Though on January 26th, 1384, a nine months' truce was signed with France, danger still threatened from the Scots, who crossed the Border in February at the expiration of their truce with England, strong in their newly made treaty with France.⁴ An army was despatched northwards under Lancaster and his brother Thomas of Woodstock. Lancaster did no more than make a demonstration in force as far as Edinburgh, giving the inhabitants time to escape with all their property, and refusing to allow the city to be burnt. His opponents declared that he had devastated Northumberland, that he had inflicted hardships on his troops but that not a single Scot was any the worse for his invasion.⁵ His clemency was certainly a serious departure from what had become an honoured English tradition. Negotiations opened with Charles VI in May, 1384, failed, largely because the French could not abandon their ally of Castile, though the English tried to throw the blame upon the enemy. Peace seemed more distant than ever, when in June, 1385, it became known that French troops had been sent to Scotland, while a fleet was being prepared at Sluys, and a combined assault on England seemed likely.⁶ Preparations were made to protect the southern and eastern coasts, and Richard prepared to lead an army to Scotland in person. At the head of a fine force of 13,784 men he penetrated as far as Edinburgh, but if he proved less lenient to the enemy than his uncle, his effort was quite useless.

¹ Wycliffe, *Polemical Works*, 19-20.

² Walsingham, ii. 84, 103-104.

³ Rot. Parl., iii. 152-158

⁴ Wyntoun, iii. 18-20, Walsingham, ii. 105, Foedera, vii. 406-407.

⁵ Walsingham, ii. 111-112.

⁶ Foedera, vii. 476

In foreign politics England was thus no better situated in 1385 than she had been at the beginning of the reign. Moreover, political complications were rapidly undermining the stability of the kingdom, though perhaps the word political is too dignified to be used for the personal squabbles and conflicting ambitions which were ultimately to bring Richard to a violent end. The King himself was now entering the political lists. He was a lad of spirit, as he had shown when he faced the rebels at Smithfield, and was by no means content to accept the subordinate position which sovereignty had assumed during the latter days of his grandfather. Unfortunately he expended much of his energy in ungovernable fits of temper, in which he would throw his hood or his boots out of the window, and behave in every respect like a maniac.¹ His impetuous nature found one healthy outlet in the love he bore to his wife, the gracious girl to whom Chaucer dedicated his "Legend of Good Women". He seldom or never allowed her to leave his side, and after serving her faithfully in life, so deeply mourned her death that he refused ever to revisit the manor of Sheen where she died. Despite this, his enemies accused him, apparently quite gratuitously, of the grossest immorality, and declared, with more plausibility, that he was a carpet knight, who would impulsively swear to take action, and then delegate the hard work to others.² Unfortunately when he sought to assert himself against those who would keep him in tutelage, the only weapon that he could forge was a Court party, which was far too reminiscent of the days of Edward II. to be popular. The most prominent member of this band was Robert de Vere, who, though created in succession Marquis of Dublin and Duke of Ireland, was no favourite of the Gaveston type, for as Earl of Oxford he ranked among the chief men of the kingdom. The chief statesman of the Court party was Michael de la Pole, son of the Hull merchant who had risen to prominence in the previous reign. A man of considerable experience, as a soldier abroad and as co-guardian of the King's person at home, he was appointed Chancellor in 1383,³ and was given the Earldom of Suffolk in 1385. De la Pole was by no means a sycophant-favourite, but, when need was, opposed his master,⁴ braving his anger and still retaining his confidence. His traditions were those of a

¹ Malverne in Higden, ix. 6, *Anominal Chron.*, 202

² Walsingham, ii. 103, 148, 156. ³ Foedera, vii. 381.

⁴ Walsingham, ii. 128.

man of business, and he applied them to the work of government, his aim being efficiency and economy in administration, and the re-affirmation of royal power. Sprung as he was from the commons, he had no sympathy with aristocratic inroads on the privileges of the sovereign, but believed at the same time that a wise minister should not hesitate if possible to restrain his master ; he was, in fact, a bureaucrat, who believed in the delegation of power to ministers, appointed by and responsible to the King and not to Parliament. A man of somewhat different type was Sir Simon Burley. As Richard's tutor and as one of those who negotiated his marriage, he had been brought into intimate connection with the King. Hated by some as a man of an "irritable and angry temper," entirely opposed to the manumission of serfs,¹ his chief offence seems to have been his ascendancy over the King. Other members of the Court party were Sir Robert Tresillian, a judge who had taken an active part in the punishment of the rebels in 1381, and Nicolas Brembre, a prominent London citizen, who had already quarrelled with Thomas of Woodstock² and was soon to be known as the leader of the royalist party in the city. For the time, too, the Earl of Salisbury and the young Earl of Nottingham were to be numbered among the King's friends and Lancaster's opponents.³ Opposed to this combination stood the baronial party now headed by Thomas of Woodstock and the Earl of Arundel. The latter had been one of the King's guardians, but was little known till his opposition to the King brought him to the front. The former's influence as the youngest son of Edward III had been increased by his marriage to one of the co-heiresses of the Bohun family ; his father created him Earl of Buckingham, and Richard promoted him to the Duke-dom of Gloucester.⁴ Turbulent and unscrupulous, caring for nothing save the advancement of his own ambitions, the spiritual successor of Thomas of Lancaster, he became the leader of the new feudal party, which having cast off its ideas of manorial independence, was now bent on capturing the central government. John of Gaunt and his friends formed a third combination, and included Lord le Scrope, a wise and moderate statesman who had given universal satisfaction as Chancellor till his protests against the King's reckless generosity procured his dismissal.⁵ This party,

¹ *Anominal Chron.*, 1388.

² Cal. of Letter Book H., iii.

³ Malverne in Hugden, ix. 58

⁴ Walsingham, ii. 140.

⁵ 1382 Walsingham, ii. 68-69; Foedera, iv. 150.

standing between two political forces which corresponded to the Court party and the Ordainers of Edward II.'s reign, helped to reproduce the circumstances of bygone days with strange exactitude.

Men grumbled at the King's friends, sneering at Suffolk's commercial origin, that of a merchant rather than a knight, but reserving their bitterest hatred for Vere. The whole party was supposed to be summed up in Oxford's person, for, despite the age and stability of men like Suffolk and Burley, it was dismissed as the "company of young men who led the King to disregard the counsel of the old men".¹ This hostility was first voiced in Parliament in 1384 by Arundel, who attributed all the woes of the kingdom to the inefficiency of the government, thereby provoking the King to a retort which was more rude than to the point.² Lancaster acted the part of peacemaker on this occasion, but before Parliament had ceased to sit he became the central figure of an obscure scandal, which serves to illustrate the state of tension and suspicion which pervaded all political circles. A certain Carmelite friar came to the King and accused the Duke of plotting to slay his nephew. After a characteristic fit of temper, Richard decided to have the matter thoroughly sifted, and ordered the friar into custody. But the trial never took place, for when the King's half-brother Sir John Holland with other knights secured the prisoner and tried to extract the truth, the tortures to which they submitted the unfortunate man were so terrible, that he succumbed without throwing any light on the affair. Motives are hard to discover in this confused period, and Sir John Holland and his brutal associates cannot be said to have represented any particular political party. The one unmistakable deduction is that party feeling was running high, and that the two opposition parties were momentarily welded together, since Thomas of Woodstock declared that he would slay anyone, the King not excepted, who should dare to accuse his brother of treachery.³ Some have thought that Vere was the inspirer of the mad friar's accusations—it is at any rate obvious that no love was lost between Lancaster and the Court party, and before long he was again quarrelling with the Government, because it would not sanction a policy of active

¹ Gower, *Tripartite Chron.* in Political Songs (Rolls Series), i 418.

² "If you charge it on me and say that it is my fault that England has suffered from bad governance you are a liar—go to the devil!"—Malverne in Higden, ix 33.

³ Walsingham, ii 114-115.

hostilities against France, and so assist his ambitions in Castile. He left the Council chamber in a rage, declaring that he would give no assistance to the King unless his advice was followed. His friends had been asserting themselves of late, most especially in London, where his old ally Northampton had been organising a determined opposition to Brembre who was Mayor. The civic struggle between the victuallers, headed by Brembre, and the clothiers headed by Northampton, to decide whether victuallers from outside should be allowed to compete openly with members of the city companies, dated back to the early days of the city's resistance to Lancaster. Northampton had received Government support in 1382, before the King and his party controlled the Government,¹ but when in 1383 he was succeeded in the mayoralty by Brembre, after a fiercely contested election, it was evident that the new Mayor had the sympathy of the King.² On January 22nd, 1384, Northampton was bound over to keep the peace, but having appealed at the head of a band of rioters on February 7th, he was sent off a prisoner to Corfe Castle, condemned to ten years' imprisonment, and forbidden to come within one hundred miles of the city at the expiration of his sentence.³

These disturbances in London were considerably more than the outcome of local politics, and masked a struggle between the Court party and the opposition. The disturbances at the Council board in the following February were but a recrudescence of the same phenomena, and in revenge the Court party hatched a plot against Lancaster. It is said that they plotted to summon the Duke to the King's presence and have him at once tried for treason before Chief Justice Tresillian, but getting wind of the project, Lancaster protested openly to the King and retired to his castle at Hertford. The Duke's action was unexpectedly dignified and moderate, a fact explained by his anxiety to get support for an expedition to assert his claim to the Crown of Castile. But though a reconciliation was patched up, the quarrel flared up again during the Scottish campaign later in the same year, and the Court began to think that the Castilian expedition would be a solution of their difficulties.

¹ Cal. of Letter Book H., 200-201.

² Malverne in Higden, ix. 30

³ Cal. of Letter Book H., 229, 245-246, 248, 264-266, Malverne in Higden, ix. 30-31, 45-49; Indictment of Northampton in Powell and Trevelyan, *The Peasants' Rising*, 36-38.

John should be bribed to go out of the kingdom. The opportunity was ready to hand, for Portugal had again quarrelled with Castile and offered to support the English pretender. Volunteers, recruited in England with the Government's consent, were already fighting against the house of Trastamara in the Peninsula,¹ and the Parliament, which met in October, 1385, approved of the idea that Lancaster should lead an army thither and provided money for the project. Armed with Papal Bulls,² the would-be King raised the standard of the Cross, in token that he was going to Castile to champion the cause of Urban VI against the supporters of Clement VII. Prelates and friars preached the holy war, the Government gave it sanction, and on Lady Day, 1386, the crusader-in-chief and his wife took solemn farewell of the King, who gave each a crown of gold in token of his best wishes for their success.

The departure of Lancaster did not assuage the political differences at home. Vere, all-powerful with the King, in whose inner circle moderate men like Suffolk were no longer predominant, was becoming the best hated man in the kingdom, while it was he probably who led the King into extravagant habits, though the Queen herself and her Bohemian followers did not escape all blame. So long ago as 1382 Scrope had reproved the King for his prodigality, and since then Archbishop Courtenay, old foe of Lancaster though he was, had taken upon himself to rebuke the King for conniving at the plot to murder his uncle, which Richard strenuously repudiated, and received support from men of all parties, including Thomas of Woodstock on one side and Suffolk on the other. Further unpopularity accrued to Richard and his advisers from the continued ill-success of their foreign policy. A truce with Scotland was secured despite French subsidies sent to the Scots,³ but attempts to do the same by France failed. Charles VI was bent on invasion, but though he made great preparations early in 1386 he did not reach the rendezvous at Sluys till mid-October, too late for serious campaigning and by November he had abandoned the enterprise. Still England had been panic stricken, more especially London, round which a large army had been concentrated in an incredibly short time.⁴

¹ Foedera, vii. 436, 450-451, 453-454, 479

² Papal Letters, iv 264-265; *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 508.

³ June 27th, 1386, Foedera, vii. 526. Cf. 484-486.

⁴ Walsingham, ii. 145-146.

The soldiery, however, pillaged the country side, and Froissart tells us how men mourned the days of past greatness. England, once a power feared in France, was now helpless. In good King Edward's time the French would have been driven from Sluys, but now there was no one to vindicate the nation's honour.¹ When Parliament met on October 1st, men must have received the Chancellor's declaration that the King intended to lead an army across to France in person with contemptuous incredulity.² The storm cloud was ready to burst.

Gloucester, freed from the presence of his elder brother, now appeared as the acknowledged head of the opposition, which at once began to attack the ministers of the Crown. Richard at Eltham, whither he had retired so soon as he saw that trouble was afoot in Parliament, refused absolutely to dismiss his Chancellor and Treasurer, or even a scullion from his kitchen, at the bidding of any one. In reply, Gloucester and Bishop Arundel brought the King an ultimatum from Parliament. The terms in which they addressed their sovereign betray the recent growth in constitutional theory. They cited a statute to prove that Parliament had the right to discuss how the money it voted should be spent, another that Parliament might dissolve itself if the King did not appear within forty days, and when Richard threatened to appeal for advice and help to the King of France, they reminded him that a statute existed which empowered Parliament to depose the King, and that not so long ago this had been done.³ It mattered not that these statutes existed only in the imagination of the deputation, the allusion to them shows that it was now necessary to threaten revolution in constitutional form, to appeal to history for justification. The threat was enough. The King returned to Westminster, and consented to remove the Chancellor and Treasurer. But the matter was not allowed to rest there. Suffolk was impeached on a series of charges, of which, while most spoke of financial mismanagement and peculation, two betrayed Parliament's hostility to bureaucratic government—he had obstructed a committee recently appointed to reform the household, and he had sealed charters which were illegal and subversive of the true interests

¹ Froissart (ed Kervyn), xii. 145-147.

² Rot. Parl., iii. 215.

* Knighton Contin., 215-220; Eulogia Contin., 359-360.

of the kingdom.¹ He found a supporter in Scrope, who urged that Suffolk was no upstart but a man of wealth before his promotion to the peerage, one, too, who had shown himself to be an honest servant of the Crown in many different capacities² But Gloucester and his friends would not listen to the advice of the moderate party, and Suffolk was found guilty, imprisoned, and fined 20,000 marks Vere escaped, save that Parliament attempted to despatch him to Ireland, to take up the obligations of his newly acquired title of Duke, though it was he, not Suffolk, who had profited by the reckless prodigality of the King, and he, if anyone, who had been guilty of peculation. His noble birth saved him, and an honest minister, who could only boast a mercantile ancestry, suffered in his stead. The opposition was bent on breaking up the bureaucracy controlled by the King, and substituting an aristocratic oligarchy in its stead, but when a Council of reform was appointed, it had to allow the majority to consist of moderate men like Scrope, Wykeham, and the King's youngest uncle Edmund, Earl of Cambridge, lately promoted to the Dukedom of York. It was not to be expected that Richard would like such a commission, intended as it was "to bridle the wantonness and extravagance of his servants and flatterers,"³ and he warned Parliament that he would not allow any interference with the liberties of the Crown.

The Parliament of 1386 produced a strange result A reforming committee was nominally in power, but it could not control the actions of the King, who dared to set Suffolk at liberty, retained Vere near him, and even drew into his party a member of the hated committee, Archbishop Neville of York, who henceforth laboured as zealously as any other to procure the discomfiture of the King's enemies. It would have been wise to wait quietly till the year for which the reform committee had been appointed had run its course, but Richard at once proceeded to perambulate the country to gain support, visiting York, Chester, Nottingham, Leicester, and Wales. He tried to ascertain how many men he could muster against his opponents, and whether the sheriffs could ensure that only friends of the Court party should be returned to the next Parliament. When he was told that the country favoured the baronial opposition, and that there was little prospect of rais.

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 216; Knighton Contin., 221-223.

² Rot. Parl., iii. 217.

³ Usk, 4.

ing forces or of inducing the electors to forego their right of free election,¹ he fell back on another expedient. He consulted the judges as to whether the commission of reform lately established infringed the royal prerogative, whether Parliament might discuss what it liked, or only what the King permitted, whether the King could dissolve Parliament at will, and whether it lay with King or Parliament to punish ministers. The answers were naturally all in the King's favour,² since, quite apart from intimidation, the legal mind is slow to appreciate new tendencies, and the pretensions of Parliament certainly could not boast the respectability of age. With the law behind him, Richard faced the future with Stuart-like hopefulness. His evil genius, however, was at his elbow, for Vere not only chose this moment to repudiate his wife, Gloucester's niece³ and to marry one of the hated followers of the Queen, but also induced the King to offend the Earl of Nottingham, of whom he was jealous, and who went over to the enemy. Henry Earl of Derby, the son of John of Gaunt, also became a keen sympathiser with the opposition. For a time the decisions of the judges were kept secret, but presently reached Gloucester's ears. Both parties prepared for civil war. The Londoners bound themselves by an oath to support the King,⁴ for Brembre had the city in hand, and controlled the Mayor, Nicholas Exton, who in October was re-elected, thanks to royal interference.⁵ On the other hand, Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick gathered their forces at Waltham, whence on November 14th they sent a deputation to the King, explaining the reasons for their conduct, and charging Archbishop Neville, Vere, Suffolk, Brembre, and Tresillian with treason. Those about the King were divided in counsel. The inner ring of the Court party was for armed resistance, but the more moderate Earl of Northumberland induced Richard to interview Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick on November 17th, when he agreed to allow the accused to be arraigned in Parliament. Before this Parliament assembled, all the King's friends save Brembre managed to escape. Suffolk fled to Calais, and though recognised and sent back, managed to escape.

¹ Walsingham, ii. 161; Malverne in Higden, ix 90-91; Knighton Contin., 233.

² *Eulogii Contin.*, 361-363, *Chron. Angl.*, 380 382, *Vita Ricardi II.*, 86-89; Knighton Contin., 235-240; Malverne in Higden, ix 98-101.

³ Philippa, daughter of Eugeeraud de Coucy and Isabella, daughter of Edward III. (Cal. of Patent Rolls, 1377-1381), 260.

⁴ Cal. of Letter Book H., 314-315.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 317, 320.

a second time to a place of safety in France. The Archbishop ultimately found refuge overseas, Tresillian hid himself in London, while Vere, audacious to the last, tried to raise an army at Chester. The King did his best to co-operate with the favourite, summoning the Mayor and Aldermen of London to confer with him at Windsor on December 1st,¹ when he asked how many armed men the city could provide in case of necessity. But the Londoners were not anxious to commit themselves, pleading that they were traders not men of war, while the Mayor even begged to be allowed to resign his office. Thus when on December 20th Vere fell in with the enemy near Radcot Bridge, he realised that his own forces were few, and that he could not hope for reinforcements, and therefore made his escape across the river while his followers dispersed.

Further resistance on the part of the King was hopeless. He spent a miserable Christmas in the Tower, and two days later the triumphant lords reached London to be welcomed by the discreet citizens. The "Lords Appellant," as they were coming to be called, were not quite so unanimous as it appeared on the surface. Already on December 12th they had fallen out as to the way they were to deal with the King. Gloucester wished to depose him at once, but Henry Earl of Derby, fearing that he would not be strong enough to assert his father's claims to the vacant throne, supported Warwick's opposition to such a course.² A list of the proscribed was drawn up, certain persons were banished from Court; and the threat of deposition was openly held over the King, and all men awaited with considerable tension the meeting of Parliament on February 3rd. Serious though the times were, men were hardly prepared for the bitter reprisals which stamped this assembly with the title of "merciless".³ Of the five "traitors" whom the Lords Appellant, Gloucester, Arundel, Warwick, Nottingham, and Derby, had accused, two only fell into their enemies' hands. Tresillian, whose hiding-place had been discovered, and Brembre were executed, the last on such futile charges as that he had wished to change the name of London to Troynovant, the only occasion upon which false archaeology has been made a capital crime. Sir Simon Burley, Sir James Berners, Sir John Salisbury, and Sir John Beauchamp

¹ Cal of Letter Book H., 321.

² Malverne in Higden, ix. 109-110, 111, 113-114; Rot. Parl. iii. 376. Cf. 379.

³ Knighton Contin., 249.

were also put to death, and even such insignificant individuals as Thomas Usk, who had given evidence against Northampton, and one of the King's clerks did not escape. The judges who had given the opinion at Nottingham were let off with banishment to Ireland. As a crowning act of disinterested patriotism the Appellants allocated to themselves a sum of £20,000 for their exertions. The revolution seemed complete, the Court party was shattered. Vere and Pole were never to see England again, and the Archbishop of York was translated to the See of St Andrews, a mere formality, as Scotland did not acknowledge Urban VI, and his place was taken by Arundel's brother Thomas. Burley, Tresillian, and Brembre were dead. Richard must now stand or fall alone. The Bishops of London and Winchester, the Earl of Warwick, and Lords Cobham and Scrope were appointed to control his actions.

For a year the Lords Appellant ruled the country in the name of the King without marked success or failure. They signalled their accession to power by strengthening the repressive clauses of the Statute of Labourers¹. They also struck a blow at all guilds, and ordered a return of particulars concerning all such organisations,² in the belief seemingly that they were used as political weapons. Parliament itself had quite a different remedy for internal disturbances, and petitioned for the abolition of the custom of "livery," which had grown up during the reign of Edward III. Lords gave badges to their retainers, men probably who had served under them in war, and who practised at home some of the arts of rapine learnt in France, so that the poor, and even the middle class, could not obtain justice. The Government promised to take action, but the matter was postponed to the next meeting of Parliament³. The system was too useful to turbulent lords who wished to dominate the King to be lightly abrogated. In matters of foreign policy the Appellants were no more successful. Arundel, as Admiral of England, was able to protect the coast, despite a slight French raid, and even to land in France and do some damage, but in the North Northumberland's son, Harry Hotspur, as he was called, in trying to beat back a Scottish inroad was defeated and captured at Otterbourne, though his conqueror the Earl of Douglas fell in the combat.

¹ Statutes, II. 55-60, Malverne in Higden, ix. 192-194.

² Cal. of Letter Book H., 336.

³ Rot. Parl., III. 265; Malverne in Higden, ix. 189-190.

The Government was anxious to come to terms with France. In November, 1388, commissioners were appointed to negotiate a truce, to be followed by a perpetual peace, but prolonged discussion produced no result, for the French would not abandon their Scottish and Spanish allies, and the English absolutely refused to yield their King's claim to the suzerainty of Scotland.¹

Thus the rule of the Appellants was totally unremarkable, and none were found to grieve when the King quietly asserted his authority. Early in May he simply informed his Council that he was now twenty-three years of age and able to manage his own affairs, and requested the Chancellor and Treasurer to resign. Having appointed William of Wykeham as Chancellor and Thomas Brantingham as Treasurer—both well-tried statesmen of no pronounced party leaning—he announced to the nation that he had resumed the Government. Every one was pleased,² and the Appellants, unable to complain, thought it wise to seek a full reconciliation with the King and his new Council.³ Richard on his part showed that he had gained some wisdom and much dignity, though he still showed an inclination to quarrel with his Chancellor and Council.⁴ A profound calm descended upon political life. The chroniclers, whose narratives were till lately swelled with political events of the first importance, were now forced to fill up space with stories of miracles, petty ecclesiastical quarrels, and marvellous plagues of flies. A truce for three years with France and Scotland was at last secured, thanks to the fact that Lancaster had brought his campaigning in Spain to an end, where after varying fortunes peace had been signed in the spring of 1388 on a basis of compromise. The Duke's daughter Catherine, heiress to her father's Castilian claims, was married to Henry of Trastamara's grandson of the same name, the two children being recognised as heir and heiress to the throne of Castile.⁵ John himself was not only promised, but actually paid, the handsome compensation of 600,000 gold francs for resigning his claim. Peace abroad was a good augury for peace at home, and the kingdom needed a rest, for since the days of the Good Parliament it had scarce had a quiet moment. Though Lancaster had

¹ *Foedera*, vii 610-614, *Walsingham*, ii. 179-180; *Malverne* in *Higden*, ix. 201, 202.

² *Knighton Contin.*, 311.

³ *Ordinances*, i. 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 12 b-12 d.

⁵ *Ayala*, ii. 271-273, *Malverne* in *Higden*, ix. 97.

taken his share in producing this unrest, the King was now as anxious for his return as he had been in the past for his departure.¹ When on November 19th John of Gaunt landed at Plymouth, he came in the new guise of peacemaker and confidant of the King.

¹ *Ordinances*, i. 14-142, *Foedera*, viii. 641, 648.

CHAPTER XVI

THE DESPOTISM OF RICHARD II
(1389-1399)

IN the reign, begun amidst riots and continued amidst political disturbance, which was to end in the deposition and murder of the King, there was one bright interval when faction was stayed. From the day in 1389 when Richard asserted himself to 1397 peace reigned in England. Hardly a breath of malice or suspicion disturbed the surface of national life, for the opposition was inarticulate, and the King showed a happy wisdom in his methods. His old friends were forgotten. Vere and Pole, though still alive, were allowed to end their days in exile,¹ Archbishop Neville never recovered his see. Even the judges who had been banished to Ireland were left in exile, despite a movement in their favour in 1394. New friends took their places, and it seemed as though the past was buried in oblivion. The man whom Richard brought most to the front was his uncle John of Gaunt, to whom he gave the county palatine of Lancaster and the title of Duke in full possession to himself and his heirs, for hitherto its holders had never had more than a life interest.² Not content with this he showered upon him exemptions from fees and duties, and crowned all by creating him Duke of Aquitaine for life. From this time the Duke was the faithful friend and adviser of his nephew. Even his enemies recognised that his intervention brought concord, and it was noticed that defaulting officials mended their ways when it was known that he had returned.³ No attempt was made to exclude the late opponents of the Crown from a share in the government. Gloucester was conceded that position of honour to which his birth

¹ Suffolk died this same year, but Vere lived till 1392 (Walsingham, ii. 187, 212).

² *Charters of the Duchy of Lancaster*, ed. W. Hardy (London, 1845), 65-70.

³ Malverne in Higden, ix. 218.

entitled him, Arundel, Nottingham, and Derby were all admitted to the Council,¹ while Archbishop Arundel was not only left in possession of his see, but in 1391 became Chancellor, and in 1396 was promoted to Canterbury. Even Lancaster's old ally Northampton and other London malcontents, received a remission of their sentences at the request of Parliament. In every way Richard tried to make his rule popular. Through the mouth of his Chancellor he assured Parliament that though he had tried to rule well in the past, he would strive to rule even better, if possible, in the future, and urged the Commons to report all complaints of oppression.² He even allowed his ministers and Council to acknowledge their responsibility to Parliament by resigning their offices in a body, to resume them only after their acts had been examined and approved by the Commons, but no precedent was to be established thereby, and he still reserved to himself the right to appoint and dismiss ministers as he would.³ Parliament responded readily to this treatment. In 1390 it thanked him "for his good governance and gracious lordship, for the great favour and zeal which he showed for his people," and in 1391 the Commons, supported by the Lords, expressed a wish that the King's prerogative should be every whit as strong as it had been in the past, and that all legislation to the contrary, notably that during the reign of Edward II., should be declared null and void.⁴ Parliament indeed was normally a subservient body, which had obediently slaughtered the King's friends at the bidding of the Appellants, and was now just as ready to exalt the prerogative of the Crown. The great step gained was that all parties so far recognised the growth of parliamentary theory that they were content to work through the national assembly, but the mainspring of political action lay in the intrigues carried on beneath the surface of public life, not in the proceedings of Parliament.

Richard felt so secure of his position that in 1394 he undertook a task, which English Kings had usually shirked, by crossing to Ireland in person. All through the reign of Edward III the state of Ireland had been going from bad to worse. Since the attacks of the Scots under Edward Bruce in 1315-1318 only fitful attempts had been made to govern the country. Irishmen were considered to be a wild impossible race, some believed that they were cannibals,

¹ *Ordinances*, i. 17, 186.

² *Ibid.*, 258.

³ *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 257.

⁴ *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 283, 286.

whose country English statesmen used as a convenient place of banishment for their opponents. The English in Ireland were as a rule unsympathetic to the "mere Irish," though occasionally one, more farsighted than the rest, learnt the vernacular and fostered its literature.¹ In 1331 a Parliament at Westminster issued certain articles for the governance of Ireland, to ensure peace, and seemingly also to increase the royal revenues; in 1338 it was decreed that only Englishmen should fill judicial offices, and three years later all royal officials who were Irish or had married Irish wives were to be removed in favour of persons who had property in England.² Nevertheless, in 1342 the "Prelates, Earls, Barons, and Commonalty of Ireland," that is the English residents, explained that at least a third of the land once under English rule had fallen into the hands of the King's "Irish enemies," and that the royal revenue was reduced owing to the misconduct of the officials.³ Further an ordinance of 1357 confessed "that matters were in an evil way through default of good government and the neglect and carelessness of royal officers," and that the marches had been laid waste by hostile invasions.⁴ In 1361 a great Council was summoned to Westminster to discuss the state of Ireland, and at the same time the King's son Lionel, Earl of Ulster by right of his wife Elizabeth de Burgh, was sent over as his father's lieutenant. Orders were issued that none but English should hold any office or preferment, though this was mitigated subsequently in the case of ecclesiastical benefices.⁵ The chief event of Lionel's tenure of office was the promulgation of the Statute of Kilkenny in 1366. In its preamble it lamented that "many English . . . forsaking the English language, fashion, mode of riding, laws and usages live and govern themselves according to the manners, fashion, and language of the Irish enemies, and also have made divers marriages and alliances between themselves and the Irish enemies aforesaid," with dire results to the peace and good government of the country. Such actions were stringently forbidden, even concubinage with the Irish was not to be allowed, and no English were to be ruled by anything but the common law of England. March or Brehon law "which by right ought not to be called law but bad custom," was not to be used for English

¹ *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, 319-320.

² *Foedera*, II. 1191.

³ *Early Statutes of Ireland*, 332-362.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 408-419.

⁵ *Cal. of Close Rolls* (1360-1364), 163

disputants.¹ But these various attempts to crush the Irish race only increased the problem which Richard tried to solve. He began by ordering all those who held lands across the Irish Channel to repair to their possessions, but by 1385 the loyal dwellers in the Anglicised districts, the "Pale" as it was later called, were in desperate straits, and an urgent message was sent to England, showing the "great power of the Irish enemies and English rebels," and declaring that there was no remedy "except the coming of the King, our lord, in his own person," or in default at least some great lord of the kingdom.² An efficient ruler was sorely needed. The Earl of March had done something before his death in 1382, but Vere had never taken up his duties there. In 1392 there was some thought of sending Gloucester to take up the task of government, but his commission was cancelled just as he was setting out.³

Richard believed that a serious effort must be made if English rule was to be preserved; in the Parliament which met early in 1393 he showed signs of going to Ireland in person, and the project materialised in 1394, when an army was ordered to muster by August 3rd, the Cinque Ports being bidden to provide the necessary ships. Having appointed the Duke of York regent on September 24th, Richard set sail. Never since the days of Henry II. had an English King set foot in Ireland, but the experiment seemed to be entirely successful. Supported by the Earl of Ormond, he made his way to Dublin, meeting with no organised resistance, and assuming the rôle of pacifier rather than conqueror of the Irish. He divided its inhabitants into savage Irish, rebel Irish, and loyal English,⁴ and thought that the best thing was to civilise the first class, beginning with those chiefs who had come in to make submission. A certain Henry Cristall, who had for some time lived a captive among the Irish and had married a native wife, was ordered to innure them to English customs. He induced these "kings" to wear breeches and surcoats, he explained to them that at table they must not sit amid their retainers and eat and drink from the same dish and goblet, but observe the distinctions of rank, an attack on their communistic customs which they resented intensely, and he persuaded them to

¹ *Early Statutes of Ireland*, 430-468

² *Ibid.*, 484-486

³ Cal. of Patent Rolls (1391-1396), 86, *Proceedings of the King's Council of Ireland* (ed. E. J. Graves, 1877), 255-257; Malverne in Higden, ix. 264.

⁴ *Ordinances*, i. 56.

ride on civilised saddles and to use stirrups, and to accept knighthood at the hands of the English King. But even then Cristall had to confess that his teaching had done little to remove their natural rudeness.¹ Richard's intention was kindly, if perhaps a little too characteristically English, and he also showed sympathy for his second class of "rebel Irish," who he believed had been oppressed by harsh government. He consulted the English Council on the advisability of summoning an Irish Parliament to redress grievances and grant pardons. Despite a past opinion to the contrary, the Council agreed to this course, but insisted that pardons should only be granted in return for fines,² a proviso characteristic of English politicians, for Parliament had clearly denied any financial obligation for Ireland. The wisdom and sympathy of Richard's Irish policy found no favour at home, where his expedition was looked on as a mad prank by men who saw nothing absurd in an English King setting out to conquer France, and the Council soon insisted on his return to deal with a probable invasion of the Scots, and other grave matters needing the royal attention.

According to the chroniclers the chief reason for Richard's return in May, 1395, was fresh Lollard trouble. Heretical priests were boldly ordaining men to the ministry, and poems against abuses in the Church were freely circulated.³ The Appellants had taken stern measures against heresy, and a commission had been appointed to examine into Wycliffite books and their possessors, against whom the bishops had been bidden to take action. But the ecclesiastical authorities had relaxed their efforts after the fall of the Appellants,⁴ and while the King was absent in Ireland the Lollards affixed to the doors of St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey certain "conclusions" which were also laid before Parliament. With one or two exceptions, these attacked acknowledged abuses, and in some cases, such as the condemnation of Masses for the dead for a particular person by name, not because they were believed to be inoperative, except in the case of the damned, but because they were procured by money payments,⁵ the innovations were more apparent

¹ Froissart, xv. 171-178. He got the story from Cristall himself.

² Ordinances, i. 55-57, 61-63.

³ E.g., "The Complaint of the Plowman" in Political Songs (Rolls Series), .

³⁰⁴⁻³⁴⁶

⁴ Knighton Contin., 260-265, Malverne in Higden, ix. 171-177.

⁵ *Fasciculus Zizaniorum*, 360-369.

than real. Though the Commons' lack of enthusiasm for the King's return may have been caused by sympathy with this manifesto,¹ Richard compelled Sir Richard Stury, who with Sir Thomas Latimer had presented the "conclusions" to Parliament, to abjure his opinions under threat of death, and at the same time despatched letters to the Chancellor of the University of Oxford, ordering him to expel all Lollards and to institute an inquiry into the doctrines of Wycliffe's *Trialogus*, a work which had been cited in the fourth "conclusion". The heretical movement was scotched, but it was not possible to eradicate the impression that the Court party was inclined to sympathise with the Lollards. Stury's recantation might be only a politic move, and he and Sir Lewis Clifford, a well-known champion of Lollardy, remained members of the King's Council.² Some extremists may have thought that the Lollard cry, that Rome was a very stepmother to the Anglican Church, might be traced in the reissue of the Statute of Provisors in 1390, the King's remonstrances with the Pope concerning provisions and reservations and such like abuses, and the strengthening of the Statute of Præmunire in 1393. At any rate the Pope protested that this legislation was inimical to the interests of the Church, and later showed suspicion of Richard's orthodoxy by urging him to suppress the Lollards and "extinguish the baneful torch that had first been kindled under his protection".³

The trouble caused by the Lollards was not the solitary herald of approaching storms. In 1392 Richard fell foul of the Londoners, who had refused him a loan and maltreated a Lombard who found the money. Having sequestered the city's liberties, he restored them only on payment of a fine of 3000 marks and an extra sum of £100,000, though this latter was remitted at the Queen's request.⁴ It is rather a strange commentary on history, that whereas the opponents of Charles I. looked back to 1388 as a precedent, Charles II., bent on establishing despotic power, took the events of 1392 as his justification for sequestering London's corporate

¹ The Commons told the King that the Lords wished his return for reasons not told to them and they were careful not to press his return (Cal. of Letter Book H., 420-421).

² Ordinances, 1. 17. It could not be foreseen that in 1402 Clifford would turn King's evidence against his former friends (*Annales Ricardi II.*, 347).

³ Cal. of Letter Book H., 428.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 377-381; *Foedera*, vii. 730-733, 735-736, 739-740.

privileges. There were other signs of coming disturbances in the country. Lands were seized by force of arms and there was none to do justice, lords continued to give livery to all and sundry, men of Chester and the Welsh Marches waylaid merchants and plundered the neighbouring counties, and ex-prisoners terrorised those whose evidence had procured their punishment. Complaints were made of the encroachments of seignorial jurisdiction, and of the oppressive acts of the forest officials. It was even said that lawyers used their dual positions of counsel and law reporter to falsify the records in favour of their clients.¹ Highway robbery was a daily occurrence, not only in the open country of Surrey, but, as Chaucer knew to his cost, even in the city of Westminster, under the shadow of the King's palace.²

These widespread disorders in the country were doubtless partly due to the soldiers thrown out of employment by Richard's policy of peace with France. In 1391 he welcomed friendly overtures made by Charles VI.³ With the not very cordial assent of Parliament, Lancaster met Charles VI in March, 1392, but the only result was the prolongation of the truce for another year. A representative Council at Stamford having approved the action of Lancaster, negotiations were renewed, but it was not till 1394 that a truce for four years was signed, though the French needed peace as much as did the English, since their King was now a victim to that periodic insanity which possessed him for the rest of his life. In 1395 during a lucid moment Charles wrote to Richard urging a definite and final understanding between the two countries.⁴ Negotiations were again resumed on the basis of a marriage between Richard and Isabella, the six-year-old daughter of Charles VI.⁵ Thanks to the goodwill on both sides, a truce to last till 1426 and the marriage treaty between Isabella and Richard were both signed at Paris on March 9th, 1395. On November 4th the wedding took place in the Church of St. Nicholas at Calais, and a distinct step towards better relations with France was thus taken.

Though peace was what England needed, a party, including Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick had been agitating against it all

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 285, 290, 295, 306, 307, 308, 318, 319.

² *Life Records of Chaucer* (Chaucer Soc., 1875), Part I.

³ St. Denys, i. 710; Walsingham, ii. 198, 199; Malverne in Higden, ix. 246-247.

⁴ *Lettres de Rois*, ii. 255-258.

⁵ Queen Anne had died June 7th, 1394.

through the negotiations, Gloucester in particular losing no opportunity of factious opposition.¹ The machinations of this party were probably responsible for a mysterious rising in 1393, which beginning in Cheshire, spread to Yorkshire, where it got mixed up with the personal quarrel of Sir Robert Rokeby and William Beckwith. The rebels complained that Lancaster, Gloucester, and Derby were plotting to "remove the lordship of the French kingdom from its liege lord the King of England, and the county of Chester also for their own benefit". The inclusion of Gloucester in this charge seems to be explained by the fact that he was at the time taking part in an embassy to France; but though he mustered his forces to protect himself and his brother Lancaster, who put down the revolt, there is reason to believe that he was in secret sympathy with the movement, and his ally Arundel was openly accused of holding his retainers ready to oppose the forces of law and order, should events turn out favourable.² The opposition to Richard was raising its head once more, and using the old cry of the Appellants that the country was being betrayed to France. Public opinion was inclined to support such an attitude, and this doubtless explained how Arundel, despite the suspicions as to his recent conduct, dared to attack Lancaster in the Parliament which met in January, 1394. He complained of the Duke's intimacy with his nephew, of his acquisition of the Duchy of Guienne, and of the moneys given him to squander on his own private ambitions in Castile, especially as he was for ever terrorising his opponents at the Council board with "rough and bitter words". The King himself answered the indictment, partly by explanation, partly by sheltering himself behind the consent of Parliament, and the charge against Lancaster having been declared unfounded, Arundel was compelled to apologise.³ Steadily the estrangement between the Earl and the King grew. Back at Court after a short exile,⁴ he chose the occasion of Queen Anne's funeral to show studied disrespect both to Richard and his dead wife, by appearing when the ceremony was half over. Mad with grief, the King struck him senseless to the ground, and had him haled to prison, and though he liberated him at the end of a week, it only

¹ Froissart, xiv. 314, xv. 80, 238, *Eulogia Contin.*, 369.

² *Annales Ricardi II*, 159-162.

³ Rot. Parl., iii. 313-314.

⁴ *Annales Ricard: II*, 166.

tended to prove that the opposition was strong enough to show almost open defiance.¹

This outburst of the King at the funeral of his first Queen is significant. The death of Anne marks a change in the King and in the fate of the nation. Again and again her influence induced Richard to stay his hand, and if this was in some cases a mere formal procedure, made fashionable since the days of Queen Philippa, there are instances when it is obvious that her action was not collusive. His happy home life had helped to carry the King through many troubles, and after he lost that comfort he seemed to become more reckless. It was probably from this time onward that he gave rein to his senses, "remaining sometimes till midnight, sometimes till morning in drinking and other excesses that are not to be named".² His second marriage was as disastrous in its consequences as his first was successful, for it was thought to be a mere move in the game of party politics, and that "eager to pour forth his pent-up venom, he thought by the help and favour of the King of France to destroy his enemies".³ Moreover, it was believed that there was a sinister significance in the way the body of Vere was brought from Louvain, where he died, and buried with much pomp at Colne in Essex in 1395. The two parties in the state were becoming mutually suspicious, and Richard showed the change that was coming over him by the era of reckless extravagance which he began after his return from France. He had always had a weakness for pomp and show. Nothing could exceed the splendour of his own and his Queen's attire, nor the magnificence of the pageants on the day that the Londoners celebrated their reconciliation with him,⁴ and the tournament became once more a conspicuous feature of English social life. But all his expenditure was not on useless show. It was Richard who undertook the restoration of Westminster Hall,⁵ and left it much as we see it to-day. In 1395 he ordered the fine tomb in Westminster Abbey which covers the mortal remains of himself and his first wife, and issued a second contract for the recumbent figures which surround it. In the fields of literature he gave his patronage to Chaucer, who, among many other offices, was clerk of the King's works at Westminster, Windsor, the Tower, and

¹ *Annals Ricardi II.*, 168-169, 424; *Walsingham*, ii. 215, *Foedera*, vii. 784, 785.

² *Vita Ricardi II.*, 169-170.

³ *Usk*, 9.

⁴ *Political Songs (Rolls Series)*, i. 285-286.

many other places.¹ Gower, too, was among his early courtiers, and Flóissart, when he came to England for the second time in 1395, was welcomed by the sovereign whom he had last seen as an infant being baptised in the Cathedral of Bordeaux. But this gentle splendour and restrained munificence gave place to a wild extravagance after Richard had seen the glories of a French Court. In his interview with Charles VI, prior to his marriage, and at the marriage itself he spared no expense, and the scandalised chroniclers held up their hands in horror at the money thus wasted.

A warning note was struck in the Parliament of 1397, which complained of the abuse of livery and maintenance, the insecurity of the Scottish Marches, and the method of appointing sheriffs and other officers. But the chief complaint was the thriftlessness of the King's household, where many bishops and ladies with their attendants were living free of expense. Richard at once sent for the lords, with whom he personally discussed the indictment, for such he considered it. He declared that to discuss his private expenses was an infringement of his prerogative, and demanded the name of the man who had introduced the subject. The Speaker, Sir John Bushy, with somewhat servile alacrity, returned the name of Sir Thomas Haxey, with the humblest excuses of the Commons for their temerity.² This abject abandonment of any privilege of free speech in Parliament was not altogether surprising in the light of recent history, but it is noticeable that Haxey's name is not to be found on the lists of those returned to Parliament. Being a priest, he was probably present as representing the clergy, under the "præmunientes clause," and as such was perhaps not regarded by his fellow-members in the same light as a knight of the shire or a burgess. In any case he was thrown to the wolves. The lords declared that any one inciting Parliament to reform anything which touched the King's person was a traitor, and Haxey was duly condemned to death, only to be forgiven at the request of the bishops. At first sight this might seem a matter of small immediate importance, significant though it was of the position of Parliament in 1397; but as a matter of fact Richard, whose sense of importance had been increased by the offer of the German electors to name him Emperor, saw in it a repetition of the events

¹ Cal. of Patent Rolls (1388-1392), 82, 288-289.

² Rot. Parl., iii, 338-339. Cf. 407-408.

of 1388, when an attack on the household had paved the way to his humiliation two years later. To attribute to him a long-planned scheme of revenge, which was now coming to fruition, is to accept too lightly the accusation of his none too acute opponents, and to ascribe to him a strength of character which he did not possess, or a gift of deceptive cunning only to be explained by incipient insanity. The truth seems to be that the hand of Gloucester was behind the attack on the household, since he chose this moment to quarrel with the King. Having failed to keep Lancaster, the King's chief supporter, in Guienne,¹ he sought to bring odium on the King by attacking his foreign policy, and he openly rebuked Richard for surrendering Brest to the Duke of Brittany. High words passed between them, and though they parted on friendly terms, the Duke continued his intrigues. He argued that by the surrender of Brest and Cherbourg "the kingdom was being brought to ruin by our King Richard," and tried to induce Arundel, Derby, Nottingham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and other ecclesiastics, to join a conspiracy to imprison the King and his two uncles of Lancaster and York.² Nottingham, disinclined to return to his old associates, betrayed their plans, Derby was loyal in imitation of his father, Richard's real foes were Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick. These he determined to crush. He therefore invited them to dine with him on July 8th, but Gloucester pleaded illness, while Arundel retired to his fortified castle at Reigate. Only Warwick appeared, to be at once arrested. Richard secured his second victim, by assuring Archbishop Arundel that, if his brother surrendered, no harm would come to him. Gloucester was still at Pleshy, but early in the morning of July 9th he was called out of bed by the arrival of a strong force, led by the King in person, who forthwith sent him under arrest to Calais.

Thus committed to a definite line of action, Richard took steps to put himself right with the nation. On July 15th he issued a proclamation announcing the arrests and naming a long list of nobles who had assented to his action, including the Duke of York and his son the Earl of Rutland, the Duke of Lancaster and his son the Earl of Derby, the Earl of Kent and the Earl of Hunting-

¹ Froissart, xv. 182.

² Traison, i-6, St. Denys, ii 476-478. The story is partly confirmed by the later confession of Warwick (Usk, 16; *Vita Ricardii II.*, 140).

don, his own half-brother and nephew respectively, and the Earl of Nottingham. Further, he declared that though the accused had been guilty of "assemblies and ridings against our kingdom of England," this was not the reason of their arrest, but that they must answer for certain "oppressions and extortions against our kingdom and our majesty" which were revealed at the last Parliament. Friends and followers of the accused might be assured that no proceedings would be taken against them.¹ The hostile chronicler believed that this was bluff, and that Richard meant all along to hark back to the forgotten incidents of 1388,² but it is more than probable that he thought he could prove that the three lords were concerned in a traitorous movement in connection with the recent parliamentary incidents which had so startled and enraged him. While Parliament was assembling in answer to his summons, he mustered his supporters at Nottingham to draw up the form of indictment to be laid before Parliament. With grim humour a long list of nobles set out to "appeal" Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick of treason, and the Earls of Rutland, Kent, Huntingdon, Nottingham, Somerset, and Salisbury, Lord Despenser and Sir William le Scrope thus formed a fairly representative body of magnates, including several members of the royal family, an ex-Appellant, a Lollard of the Court, and a representative of the Lancastrian party in the person of the Earl of Somerset. The support of John of Gaunt was ungrudgingly given to his nephew, who had latterly shown him peculiar consideration. Early in 1396 Lancaster had married, with the King's consent, a certain Katharine Swinford,³ who had been his mistress for many years and had borne him four children. Katharine had been long since recognised as a person of preponderating importance in the Duke's household, but it needed all the King's support to secure the social position of the new Duchess. However, after she had taken a prominent part in the marriage ceremonials of the King at Calais, and the Pope had recognised the union and legitimatised its offspring,⁴ none were surprised when the King issued letters

¹ *Foedera*, viii 6-7; Cal of Letter Book H., 437-438.

² *Annales Ricardi ii*, 205-207.

³ *Ibid.*, 188; *Vita Ricardi ii*, 128. She was the daughter of a Flemish Knight named Sir Payn Roet and widow of Sir Thomas Swinford. Her sister was wife of the poet Chaucer.

⁴ *Papal Letters*, iv. 545.

patent giving a civil sanction to the Papal act,¹ and the Beauforts or "Fairborn," as the children were called, at once took their place among the descendants of noble houses, the eldest John being created Earl of Somerset.

Richard was determined to leave nothing to chance. He gathered a bodyguard of Cheshire men, and ordered the great lords and all who wore the royal livery of the white hart to muster at Kingston-on-Thames on September 15th to escort him to Westminster. No pains were spared to influence the elections to the Parliament, which assembled on September 17th in a wooden hall specially built within the precincts of the palace at Westminster. The Chancellor announced that Parliament had been summoned to establish the rights of the sovereign and to remove anything which diminished them;² in other words, to sanction an unlimited autocracy. Though constitutional forms were followed, there was no pretence of free speech. While all who were not of the King's retinue were forbidden to carry arms, four thousand royal archers surrounded the hall, which had open sides, and threatened to shoot whenever there was any sign of disturbance.³ In Parliament itself the King had three active henchmen, Sir John Bushy, Speaker for the third time, Sir Henry Green, and Sir William Bagot. From the first there was no attempt to bring accusations of recent treachery against the King's enemies, but one of the first steps was to revoke the pardons granted to Gloucester and his accomplices for their past actions as Appellants, and to declare null and void the commission of Government established in 1386. Such a course does not necessarily imply that no plots had been recently hatched, but it shows that Richard's aim was to secure his royal prerogative. He cared little for persons but much for his rights. Peace had reigned when Parliament was ready to exalt his prerogative, and his erstwhile enemies had been ready to accept his supremacy. Indeed had it now been merely a question of revenge, Derby and Nottingham would have shared the fate of their old associates.

The first victim was Archbishop Arundel, who was banished and with the Pope's assistance transferred to the See of St Andrews. On September 21st Richard's Appellants appeared in Parliament and solemnly "appealed" Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick for

¹ *Foedera*, vii. 849-850.

² *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 347; *Usk*, 9.

³ *Usk*, 10, 11, *Vita Recordis*, ii., 209.

their actions in 1386 and 1387. Arundel was the first to be put on his trial. Though browbeaten by his judges, he showed a brave front, taking his stand on the pardons granted to him by the King. In cross-examination by Lancaster, Derby, and the King, he defied them all, and when Bushy ventured to intervene with an allusion to the faithful commons, he turned on him with fine scorn, "Where are those faithful commons? Well do I know thee and thy crew there, how ye are gathered together, not to do faithfully, for the faithful commons are not here. They, I know are sore grieved for me, and I know that thou hast ever been false." When Lancaster as Seneschal pronounced the verdict, he did not blench, and went proudly to his death on Tower Hill.¹ Parliament next considered the case of Gloucester. The Earl of Nottingham was ordered to produce his prisoner, but on September 24th it was announced that the Duke had died under arrest. The same judgment was entered against him as against Arundel, though everything points to the conclusion that the unfortunate captive was beguiled into a confession on the promise of his life, and then quietly put to death.² When on the 28th Warwick was brought up, "like a wretched old woman he made confession of all, wailing and weeping and whining that he had done all, traitor that he was," a confession remarkable in its apparent allusion to recent events. It may be that now for the first time the King had definite evidence of the sedition which he had suspected. This alone can explain his joyful cry, "By St. John Baptist, Thomas of Warwick, this confession of yours is to me more welcome than the value of all the lands of the Duke of Gloucester and the Earl of Arundel". Cringing saved Warwick's life. He was deprived of his possessions and sentenced to life-long imprisonment.³ Harsh, unconstitutional, and despotic though Richard's actions may have been, his behaviour in the day of triumph compares very favourably with that of the Appellants. The only blood shed was that of Gloucester and Arundel, and it is hard to squeeze out a tear for either victim. The chroniclers who wrote after Richard's fall were naturally very

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 377, Usk, 13-15, *Vita Ricardi* ii., 136-138, *Annales Ricardi* ii., 214-218, *Elogia Contin.*, 374-375.

² See the careful examination of this point by Professor Tait in *Owens Coll Historical Essays* (Manchester, 1903), 193-216.

³ Rot. Parl., iii. 379-380, Usk, 16-17; *Vita Ricardi* ii., 140, *Annales Ricardi* ii., 220-221, *Elogia Contin.*, 375.

eloquent on the virtues of these martyrs and saints, but it was really only the fact of Richard's ultimate failure which produced this enthusiasm for his enemies.

Before adjourning, Parliament reaffirmed the pardon of all those who had been implicated in the events of 1386-1388, thus giving final evidence that revenge was not Richard's object. His real aim became apparent when Parliament reassembled at Shrewsbury on January 28th. The Commons not only granted liberal supplies of money, but in addition conceded the customs on wool, wool-fells, and leather to the King for life. Finally a committee of eighteen, drawn from both houses, was appointed to examine and determine all petitions hitherto unanswered, and to consider other matters, which should subsequently need to be decided.¹ Thus did Parliament in a session of three short days deliver itself into the hands of the King, resigning both its control of the purse and its advisory privileges. The nation was furious at this betrayal of its rights. The man who had seen the *Vision of Piers Plowman* roused himself to castigate this submissive and corrupt assembly.² Still the accusations of tampering with the records levelled at the King seem to imply that Parliament never meant to delegate its powers so completely as it did.³ Indeed little might have been heard of the resolution, had not Richard himself drawn attention to his despotism by declaring that his subjects and their property were his chattels to be dealt with as he liked, and that he was a lawgiver who could frame and change the laws of the kingdom at his will.⁴ Moreover, he emphasised his power by increasing the solemnity of Court ceremonial, setting up a throne in his chamber whereon he sat from dinner-time till evensong "spekyng to no man, but overlokynge alle menn; and yf he loked on eny mann, what astat or degré that ever he were of, he moste knele".⁵ The time was past when English Kings could do these things, or work without rather

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 353, 356-357, 358; Statutes, ii. 107.

² The authorship of the *Vision of Piers Plowman* is much in dispute, but Professor Skeat believes that it and *Richard the Redless*, here referred to, are by the same author. See *Vision of Piers Plowman*, Preface IV, pp. cvii *et seq.*

³ *Annales Richardi II*, 222. Cf. Rot. Parl., iii. 418. The 1388 Parliament had passed a very similar resolution (Rot. Parl. iii. 256).

⁴ Rot. Parl., iii. 419, 420.

⁵ English Chronicle, 12, translating *Eulogia Contin.*, 378.

than through Parliament. Richard might rule despotically but he must not advertise the fact.

There are some who believe that the crisis of 1397 marks a time when Richard began to become insane, but though he was undoubtedly unbalanced, his vagaries were no more than can be accounted for by the intoxication of success acting on a character that had never known real discipline. He roused the bitter mirth of his opponents by the titles that he showered on his supporters. His cousins Derby and Rutland were made Dukes of Hereford and Aumâle respectively, his half-brother Kent became Duke of Surrey, and his nephew Huntingdon Duke of Exeter. Nottingham received the Dukedom of Norfolk, the Earl of Somerset was promoted to the new title of Marquis of Dorset, Despenser received the Earldom of Gloucester, Neville of Raby the Earldom of Westmorland, Sir William Scrope became Earl of Wiltshire, and Sir Thomas Percy Earl of Worcester. But these "Dukelings"¹ were not so hated as the King's three special friends, Sir John Bushy, Sir Henry Green, and Sir William Bagot. Political pamphleteers broke out into sarcastic rhymes. The "*bush*" grown wild should be pruned and held low, the "*long gras* that is so *grene*" must be mowed down and raked away, as to the "*bag*," it is so rotten on every side and its bottom is so near falling out that the only thing to do is to have it cut up and made much smaller.² Bushy and Bagot were to many but reincarnations of Vere, and, with the new Earl of Wiltshire, were the young men who induced their master to forsake the counsel of the old men. Doubtless the most hated of all was Bushy, whose ability and eloquence might be undeniable, but who was "cruel and ambitious beyond measure, and greedy for other men's goods". It was perhaps natural that Richard should turn to these men for support. He had found that the older nobility were really his rivals, and he therefore tried to raise up a new official class such as the Tudors were to find so useful. This perhaps explains why some, like the new Duke of Norfolk, who stood by him through 1397, became suspicious so soon as that crisis had passed. Happening one day in December to meet his old ally Hereford on the road between Brentford and London, Norfolk unburdened himself of his fears that the King was only waiting his

¹ *Annales Ricardi II*, 355

² Political Songs (Rolls Series), 1. 363-366.

opportunity to revenge himself on themselves, the two last survivors of the Appellants, and that one section of the King's advisers was bent on the extirpation of the whole Lancastrian party. When Hereford declared that the King's pardons made such things impossible, Norfolk somewhat pertinently referred him to the way pardons had been annulled in the past¹. Such was the story Hereford told to his father, and later to the King. It may very well be that Norfolk felt that Richard might desire his removal as the accomplice of Gloucester's murder, but as to the alleged plot against the Lancastrian party it seems that it was Norfolk himself who was lying in wait for John of Gaunt.² It was then perhaps not surprising that Hereford betrayed these unwise confidences. Strangely enough in view of his alleged confidences Norfolk showed no fear in obeying the King's summons to answer the charge brought against him. On February 23rd accuser and accused appeared before him at Oswestry, but the trial was adjourned to April 28th at Windsor, where both meanwhile were to remain under arrest. On March 19th the King met the parliamentary commission at Bristol, where it was decided that, if the evidence produced was not sufficient for a verdict, the matter should be referred for solution to the law of chivalry, and when this proved to be the case, the two combatants were ordered to fight out their differences in single combat at Coventry on September 16th.³ Richard desired to hush the matter up, especially when Hereford accused his enemy of complicity in Gloucester's murder.⁴ Despite his efforts, the lists were set up on the appointed day, but just when Hereford was on the point of charging, the King intervened and stopped the duel. Later it was announced to the astonished crowd that Norfolk had been banished for life and Hereford for ten years. It is said that after the verdict Richard showed great favour to Hereford, who was treated as an honoured guest and received an abatement of four years of his

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 360, 382.

² Usk, 23. This is partly confirmed by the statement of Exeter in 1399 that Richard Norfolk and Bagot tried to drag him into a plot to murder Lancaster (*Chronicles of London*, 54). According to Traison, 16-17, the Duke of Norfolk said in his defence that it was true that he had once laid an ambush for the Duke of Lancaster, who, however, had forgiven him for it. It may be that this alludes to the plot against Lancaster as far back as 1385, in which Norfolk, or Nottingham as he then was, may have had a share, but it is unlikely.

³ Rot. Parl., iii. 383.

⁴ Traison, 14, 15.

sentence when he came to bid his sovereign farewell at Eltham, a concession doubtless due to Lancaster's influence. The true meaning of Richard's conduct is hard to find. It may be that realising the great danger to his despotic ideas which lay in the ambitions of the older baronage, and having secured as his instruments efficient men of business drawn from a rank which did not aspire to rule the King, he thought that the only way to make their path easy was to scotch the power of the greater nobles. Viewed from this point of view the banishment of Norfolk and Hereford seems almost explicable.

Under the stress of opposition Richard was losing all restraint, and he now gave full rein to his love of luxury and splendour. The Court kept the Christmas festivities of 1398 in such style that 26 or 28 oxen and 300 sheep, not counting innumerable fowls, were consumed every day¹. Archbishop Arundel's parting shot before his exile had been a severe reproof of the luxury which surrounded the King,² and there is every reason to believe that the attendants of the little Queen were making the most of their opportunities. Richard showed no inclination to take the Archbishop's advice, nay rather "He continued with such worldly pomp as ear hath not heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man".³ Thus though Parliament had voted plentiful supplies, and an instalment of the Queen's dower was paid in November, 1397, Richard was driven to leave his debts unpaid,⁴ and worse, to wring money from his subjects by new and oppressive devices. He sent round receipts filled up to certain sums which were thrust on persons whom he had marked down to lend him money, individuals and corporations were compelled to give blank cheques to be filled up as the Crown liked. No wealthy person escaped, and no one ever saw his money again. On one occasion the King threatened to visit seventeen counties with condign punishment for having supported the Appellants in the past, unless they bought pardons by sealing bonds for large amounts. Great was the outcry against this new taxation, and almost worse was the King's method of making his subjects seal blank documents, which he could fill up as he liked did they displease him, the new oaths to punish all critics of his Government exacted from the sheriffs, and the punishment of offenders by martial law.⁵ The

¹ *Vita Ricardis ii.*, 148.

² *Eulogii Contin.*, 376-377.

³ Usk, 18

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ In addition to all this, loans amounting to £2000 were raised by the King Cal. of Patent Rolls (1396-1399), 171-182.

ugliest form of despotism showed itself in the way the King could not trust himself to his subjects, but must have a strong body-guard of unruly Chester archers in attendance night and day, nay even when he went on pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas Becket.¹ Even the poet Chaucer urged Richard to mend his ways :—

O prince, desyre to be honourable,
 Cherish thy folk and hate extorcious !
 Suffre no thing, that may be reprevable
 To thyng estat, don in thy regioum.
 Show forth thy swerd of castigacioun,
 Dred God, do law, love trouthe and worthinesse,
 And wed thy folk agen to stedfastnesse ²

But the appeal fell on deaf ears. Nothing could stop Richard from “ever hastening to his fall,”³ and in March, 1399, he set the crown on his folly by sequestering the Lancastrian estates on the death of John of Gaunt, despite his past promise that Hereford should succeed. This attack on property extinguished the last spark of loyalty in the nation. Men can watch their fellows die at the hands of kings, believing themselves to be immune, but that which touches the pocket touches all. Richard had grasped at the shadow and neglected the substance. In his attempt to appear a despot in the eyes of the world, he had provoked his subjects to resistance, and yet while a restless people was ready to rise, and an injured prince of the blood royal was nursing his wrongs, he crossed to Ireland and left the way open for his foes.

A rising of the Irish had slain the King's lieutenant, the Earl of March, in the summer of 1398, and all through the spring of 1399 Richard was preparing to avenge him in person. He seems to have been quite conscious of the dangers he left behind him, for he took with him a considerable treasure and many of the Crown jewels. Indeed the expedition to Ireland seems to have been an attempt to shake off the troubles that were gathering round him.⁴ He appointed the Duke of York, an easy-going unenterprising prince, as regent, and he also left behind the Treasurer, the Earl of Wiltshire, and the hated triumvirate, Bushy, Green, and Bagot.⁵ With him he took a large number of nobles, and also the eldest sons of Hereford and the late Duke of Gloucester, the one to sur-

¹ *Annales Ricardi ii*, 237; Usk, 23, *Eulogii Contin*, 379-380.

² “Lak of Stedfastnesse,” ll. 22-28.

⁴ *Annales Ricardi ii*, 238, 239.

³ Usk, 23

⁵ *Brut*, 356-357, *Foedera*, viii. 83

vive to be the victor of Agincourt, the other to die shortly of disease. Setting sail on May 29th from Milford Haven, he landed two days later at Waterford, and after a six days' rest set out for Kilkenny. His intention was to punish MacMurrough, King of Leinster, who had submitted in 1395 but was once more in arms. Richard, however, was no match for the Irishman's guerilla tactics, and after a campaign, strongly reminiscent of the old Welsh wars, the English had to make their way in a starving condition to Dublin.¹ The stormy weather having begun, all communication with England was cut off for six weeks, and when at last a ship got through, it was to bring the news that Henry of Lancaster had landed in Yorkshire and was overrunning the country.

The inevitable had happened. Deprived of his estates, Henry had a grievance with which most men would sympathise, and it mattered little that when he landed at Ravenspur in Yorkshire at the end of June, he was accompanied by only a handful of men, including Archbishop Arundel and his nephew, the heir of the executed Earl. As he advanced into the country he was welcomed on all sides. He first directed his march towards the Lancastrian castles of Yorkshire—Pickering, Knaresborough, and Pontefract—which were all delivered up to him. At Pontefract the magnates of the North, including the Earl of Northumberland, his son Henry "Hotspur," and the newly created Earl of Westmorland, came flocking to his standard. In their company he proceeded to Doncaster, where he swore that he had only come to regain his inheritance and that Richard should be allowed to reign till his life's end.² Though the phraseology of this oath implied that already Henry intended to claim the throne at Richard's death, it satisfied for the time many who only wanted a check on Richard's despotism, such as was suggested in the circular letters sent out to the commonalty and the magnates.³ Meanwhile, the Duke of York was doing his feeble best to avert the danger which threatened his nephew. He had never been a man of action, but had he been so he could have done little. He marched to St. Albans with an army, but it was soon obvious that there was little enthusiasm for the King's cause. Nobles who owed everything to the King, like Westmorland and

¹ Creton, 297-310, Traison, 27-33.

² See *Testimony of the Percies* in *Archæologia*, xvi. 141, Hardyng, 352.

³ Traison, 35-37.

Dorset, were openly or secretly against him, it was even said that the regent's own son was playing a treacherous rôle in Ireland, and York determined that the best thing he could do was to lead his men westwards, in the hope of making a junction with Richard when he landed. Henry, realising that he must prevent this at all costs, also directed his march westwards, falling in with the Duke and his men near Berkeley. Resistance on the part of the royalist leaders was useless, for the majority of the levies did not intend to fight: a few enthusiasts tried the issue of arms, but they were captured, and York rode into the camp of the enemy. Bristol betrayed the King's friends, who had sheltered within its walls, and Scrope, Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, and Green were put to death. As all that Henry now had to fear was the army returning with the King, and perhaps the loyalty of Richard's favourite county of Chester, he began to march northwards from Bristol through the Welsh March. The army from Ireland returned in two detachments. First, Salisbury tried to raise the Welsh and the men of Chester, but finding as little enthusiasm here as York had done in other parts of the kingdom, retreated to Conway. When Richard arrived¹ he fared no better, his men began to desert, and in despair he fled disguised as a friar to join Salisbury. From Conway he sent the Dukes of Exeter and Surrey to Henry at Chester, while he himself, deserted save for sixteen followers whose past records forbade their trusting themselves to the tender mercies of the other side, wandered from castle to castle in great discomfort. He returned to Conway to receive Henry's envoys, Archbishop Arundel and Northumberland. According to the chronicler Creton, who was with the King at the time, the latter enticed the King out of the castle, seized him and carried him off a prisoner to Flint, whence he was fetched by Henry in person to Chester, but others declare that Richard offered to abdicate, then and there, on condition that his last faithful followers should be spared, and went off willingly to surrender himself to his rival.² Be this as it may, Richard's days as King were over.

The reign of Richard II. still remains an unsolved problem. He came to the throne amidst troubles, he grew to manhood amidst rivalries and jealousies, social and religious discontent dogged his

¹ There is great difference about the date. Usk, 27, gives July 22nd.

² Traison, 37-61; Creton, 311-375; *Annales Ricardi ii*, 242-243, 245-250; *Vita Ricardi ii.*, 152-156.

footsteps at almost every turn, and finally he fell. It was Richard's fate to experience a recrudescence of that feudal spirit which had puzzled Edward I. and shattered Edward II., and he was not strong enough to stand against it. His appearance was too feminine, his prodigality too obviously the product of weakness. It was only by fits and starts that he could concentrate his attention, for he was ever fonder of pomp and display than of the business of Government. More especially he neglected the control of the members of his household, who brought their master into disrepute by their arrogance and rapacity.¹ His principles were, so far as we can gather, generous, and his career suggests a sympathy for the poor at every turn. Can it be that the profound distrust he inspired in the minds of the magnates arose from a clash of principle? Is it possible that the lad really intended to grant the charters of manumission in 1381, that his refusal in 1391 to deny education to the villein's son² was part of a set policy, and that the territorial class steadily lost all sympathy with the man who would strike at their interests? Is there complaint of something more than favouritism in Adam of Usk's remark that it was Richard's nature to abase the noble and exalt the base?³ No conclusive answer can now be given. Later research may solve the problem.⁴

¹ *Vita Ricardi II.*, 169

² Rot. Parl., iii. 294.

³ Usk, 29.

⁴ A French chronicler writes. "Rumor publicus referebat discordiam motam esse inter regem Anglie et avunculos ipsius, quia spretis nobilibus, omnia regni ardua ignobilium consilio pertractebat et fidelitati eorum specialius se commitens eisdem cicias justo obtemperabat in omnibus" (St. Denys, i. 494, 496).

CHAPTER XVII

“THE UNQUIET TIME OF HENRY IV”
(1399-1405)

“A WONDROUS and fickle land is this, for it hath exiled, slain, destroyed, or ruined so many kings, rulers, and great men, and is ever tainted and toileth with strife, variance, and envy.” Such were the unfortunate Richard’s musings as he lay a close prisoner in the Tower, while his enemies discussed their plans for his deposition.¹ It was generally recognised that the Duke of Lancaster would ascend the throne, but the political sense of the nation demanded that he should do so according to constitutional forms. The monasteries therefore were ordered to produce their chronicles, and send learned men to expound them before a committee of erudite doctors and bishops appointed to discuss Henry’s claims and to arrange for the removal of Richard.² For a time, perhaps, it was hoped that the chronicles might prove the truth of a legend, which had been gaining credence of late, that the Lancastrian house represented the senior branch of Henry III.’s family, Edward I having been preferred before his brother Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, by reason of the latter’s mental or bodily infirmity. The committee of learned doctors certainly discussed this matter, but the evidence of the chronicles was against the theory³ it was decided that it was Richard’s evil government which made his removal necessary, and the precedent cited was strangely enough not the deposition of Edward II. but that of Frederic II. by the Council of Lyons in 1245. Richard offered no resistance.

¹ Usk, 30. The chronicler reports the speech as heard by himself

² *Ibid.* 29, *Annales Ricardi II.*, 252

³ Usk, 30-31. The author was a member of the committee, and quotes the references refuting the story at length

When a deputation waited on him in the Tower on September 29th, he signed a deed of abdication with his own hand, adding a wish that Henry might succeed him. It was officially recorded that he signed away his kingdom quite willingly and with a happy mien,¹ but later it was said that the renunciation was extracted by threats of violence,² and at the time it was well known that only after considerable pressure did he agree to renounce the spiritual honour and unction of his kingship, as distinct from his right to govern.³ Parliament, which had been summoned in his name to meet on the following day, received the recital of his deed of abdication with unanimous approval, but as the committee had decided that no mere resignation was enough, a long list of his misdeeds was drawn up and placed in juxtaposition to the coronation oath which he had thereby violated. On these grounds Richard was formally deposed, and proctors were appointed to renounce the homage and fealty of his lieges. At once Henry rose to his feet, and in the English language, so that all might understand, laid formal claim to the throne. "In the name of Fadir Son and Holy Ghost, I Henry of Lancaster chalenge this Rewme of Ingland and the Corone with all the membres and the appurtenances, als I that am discendit be right lyne of the Blode comyng fro the gude lorde Kyng Henry therde, and thorghe that ryght that God of his grace hath sent me, with helpe of my Kyn and of my Frendes to recover it: the whiche Rewme was in poynt to be undone for defaut of Governance and undoing of the gode Lawes".⁴ Amid wild enthusiasm the Archbishop of Canterbury took the claimant by the hand and set him on the empty throne decked ready for his reception.

Thus did Henry of Lancaster receive the crown, as Gower put it, by right of conquest, by right of inheritance, and by popular election.⁵ It was the claim by election that counted. By his accession Henry subscribed to the doctrine that the King was no more than the nominee of the nation. The deposition of Edward II had done something towards establishing this theory, but recent events had been far more significant. To replace a King

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 416.

² Hardyng, 352.

³ *Annales Henrici iv.*, 286.

⁴ Rot. Parl., iii. 422-423. Cf. *Annales Ricardi ii.*, 280-281; *Chronicles of London*, 43; Capgrave, 273; *Northern Registers*, 429; *Vita Ricardi ii.*, 209 Walsingham, ii. 237, gives a Latin form.

⁵ Political Songs, i. 449, n. 4.

by his legitimate heir was one thing, to depose him in favour of one who did not stand in the direct succession was quite another.¹ This elective position of the Lancastrian dynasty, and the strictly constitutional methods of the revolution which placed it on the throne, established a tradition which coloured the history of the next sixty years.

The new King, so readily accepted by the English people, was less known to them as a politician than as a knight-errant. In 1390 he had fought against the Moors at the bidding of the Genoese, and before that year was out, he had gone North to help the Teutonic Knights, whose constant wars against the heathen Lithuanians acted as a school of arms for the adventurous spirits of Christendom.² In 1392-93 he had failed in an attempt to reach Jerusalem, and in 1396 he had fought beside Sigismund of Hungary at Nicopolis, escaping with difficulty from the stricken field. It was doubtless as a warrior and not as a politician that he appealed to his new subjects.³ Indeed his political career reflected small credit upon his character, for he had there shown himself time-serving and unscrupulous, betraying none of the chivalric spirit which his military wanderings might have led us to expect. This strange contradiction is explicable if we attribute to him a deep-seated ambition, inherited from his father, and a strong control of his emotions which was a characteristic all his own. He always adapted himself to circumstances. His ambition led him to seize the English throne, and thereafter all his energies and all his undoubted abilities were concentrated on retaining the prize that he had won. For a moment it may seem strange that the warm-blooded John of Gaunt should have a son whose career as king displays what seems to be a cold, unsympathetic nature. But Henry really had the same fiery spirit that appears not only in his father, but also in most of his sons: but unlike his father, and at least one of his sons, he was pre-eminently a man of business. Efficiency was his greatest virtue. It is not a quality that wins friends among contemporaries

¹ It was to these two precedents that men looked back when William III. replaced James II. on the throne. See "True Relation of the manner of the Deposing of Edward II., also an account of the Proceedings and Articles against Richard II., and the manner of his Deposition and Resignation" (1689).

² "Expeditions of Derby," ed. by Lucy Toulmin Smith (Camden Society, 1894).

³ See his promise, made to the Londoners, to outdo Edward III. in war, alleged by Traison, 93.

or admirers among posterity, but it carried Henry IV. through many dangers, which would have overwhelmed a weaker man, and enabled him to bequeath a stable throne to his heir.

Conscious of the weakness of his position, Henry hurried on his coronation, which took place on October 13th. It was perhaps to increase the sacredness of the ceremony that a story was spread to the effect that the oil with which he was anointed had been confided by the Blessed Virgin Mary to Thomas Becket for the sacring of a king who should win back the lands lost by his ancestors and drive the Pagan before him.¹ Perhaps, too, the solemn institution of the Order of the Bath, with the King's four sons among the first members, was intended to strengthen the new dynasty, and provide it with champions for its defence in all dangers.² Still more was Henry's insecurity betrayed by the way he bowed to the forces that had placed him on the throne in his declaration of policy, whereof constitutional government and orthodoxy were the corner-stones. He pledged his word to Convocation to destroy all heretics,³ and allowed Archbishop Arundel to assure the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, that "it was the King's desire that Holy Church should have and enjoy all its Liberties and Franchises, that all the statutes and ordinances passed in the days of his noble progenitors should be firmly kept and maintained, and that all Lords spiritual and temporal, all towns and boroughs, and others should have and enjoy their Liberties and Franchises." He promised that "he would not be guided by his own will nor by his own desire or individual opinion, but by common advice, counsel, and assent," and as an earnest of his intentions he went out of his way to condemn the recent delegation of parliamentary power to a committee.⁴ He even so far acknowledged his parliamentary title as to ask the "advice and assent" of the estates in regulating the succession, whereby his eldest son Henry was declared heir to the throne to the exclusion of the Mortimer claims.⁵ It was also significant of the new government's future policy that

¹ *Annales Henrici IV.*, 297-300; *Elogii Contin.*, 380-384, Walsingham, ii. 239; St Denys, ii. 726-730.

² *Chronicles of London*, 48; *Annales Henrici IV.*, 291; *Liberatio Pannorum in Magna Garderoba*, printed in Anstis' *Order of the Bath*, 22. Some have doubted that the Order of the Bath dates from this creation of knights, but see Anstis' *Order of the Bath, Observations Introductory*.

³ Wilkins, *Concilia*, iii. 239.

⁴ Rot Parl., iii. 415, 426.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 426.

though the King accepted a certain well-known Lollard, John Cheyne, as Speaker, when presented by Parliament, clerical influence prevailed to quash the nomination. On the very next day Cheyne discovered that he was stricken with a severe illness, which he had not hitherto suspected, and requested permission to lay down his office. It even seemed possible that the triumph of the clerical party would mean subservience to Papal interference, for Parliament agreed to allow the King to modify or annul the provisions of the Statute of Provisors should he and his advisers deem it necessary. Thus did constitutionalism and orthodoxy march hand in hand.

This declaration of a programme by the new Government is of great importance in view of its future influence, but at the moment men were more interested in the fate of Richard II's friends. Though many desired that extreme measures should be taken against them, the King was frankly opposed to anything of the kind.¹ Parliament insisted that the advisers of the late King should be arraigned for their participation in his misdeeds. Sir William Bagot, the sole survivor of Richard's hated triumvirate, was summoned before the House, where he produced a written statement exculpating himself at the expense of Aumâle and other peers, who each in turn leapt up to deny the charge. When argument failed, hoods were thrown in challenge of mortal combat, and at one moment Aumâle was the recipient of twenty or more such gages; indeed it was only the intervention of the King that prevented bloodshed. But no question of principles was involved; it was merely a victorious party clamouring for the destruction of its opponents. Great must have been the disappointment, when on November 3rd Chief Justice Thirning announced the King's decision, which deprived Aumâle, Surrey, Exeter, Dorset, and Gloucester of all titles and lands secured since the appeal of 1397, though not of any held before that time.² Salisbury, having received no promotion, lost nothing, but was left to vindicate his honour in private combat with Lord Morley. Others of less piomence were treated with equal consideration. Thomas Merks, Bishop of Carlisle, for whose safety Richard had stipulated when he surrendered, was set at liberty though deprived of his see; Bagot, more fortunate still, was released after a year's confinement in the Tower and ended his

¹ So Arundel hinted to Parliament, *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 415.

² *Ibid.*, 449-453, *Chronicles of London*, 51-60; *Annales Henrici IV*, 303-320.

days in obscurity. The only person executed was a certain John Hall, once a servant of the Duke of Norfolk, who was said to be implicated in the murder of Thomas of Gloucester. Henry's great object was to wipe out the past. While a general pardon was issued with the sanction of Parliament according to precedent, there was a more definite attempt to bury old grievances by the emendation of the law of treason. In 1352 treasonable actions had for the first time been defined as compassing the death of the King, the Queen, or their eldest son, violating the Queen, the King's eldest unmarried daughter, or his eldest son's wife, levying war against the King or adhering to his enemies within or without his realm, counterfeiting his Great or Privy seal or his money, and slaying the Lord Chancellor, Treasurer, or Judges while discharging their duties¹. This definition was somewhat vague, no mention being made, for instance, of political conspiracy to depose the King without slaying him until such conspiracy had reached the proportions of civil war. Some attempt at amending the law was made in 1382 after the great revolt,² but after this it became the mere sport of parties. In 1388 the Appellants secured a declaration that the Lords in Parliament could decide what was treason and what was not, a system which enabled any triumphant party to exterminate the vanquished. When in 1397 the King triumphed in his turn, it was made high treason to attempt any reversal of the acts of the session of 1397. This naturally had to be repealed by the first Parliament of Henry IV., but the repeal went further, and declared that appeals of treason in Parliament were illegal,³ thus making it impossible for the Lords to create *ex post facto* treasons as a means of destroying vanquished politicians. Wise though these measures were, they could not remove the bad blood that had been stirred up during the turmoils of the last few years. The degraded Lords, now known by their old titles of Huntingdon, Kent, Rutland, and Despenser, were naturally furious at their loss of dignity and property, and could not believe that they would be left unmolested in the future. Salisbury, too, must have shared their fears, more particularly since he was implicated in the Lollard movement. It is hardly surprising therefore that

¹ Rot. Parl., ii. 239; Statutes, i. 319-320.

² Rot. Parl., iii. 442; Statutes, ii. 114-116.

³ Statutes, ii. 20.

within a month of the closing of Parliament these men were plotting to overthrow Henry and return to power.

Richard was still a rallying point for all disaffection, so much so that many had wished for his immediate execution. The Commons had petitioned that he should be put on his trial,¹ but Henry had shown himself anxious to save his deposed rival's life, and with Parliament's consent had relegated him to perpetual imprisonment at some place where no rescue would be possible. Disguised as a forester, he was moved by night from the Tower to Leeds Castle in Kent, and thence was taken to Pickering, Knaresborough, and ultimately to Pontefract. It may be that Richard's friends thought that public opinion was veering round, now that misfortune had shed a glamour of romance upon his name; in any case by Christmas they were plotting a rebellion against the newly crowned King. It was arranged that Henry should be surprised on Twelfth night at Windsor, whither he had retired for the festivities of the season with a very small escort. The plot was hatched in London, but it could not be kept secret. The air was full of undefined rumours. It was said that a slight indisposition which attacked the King and his eldest son was due to poison introduced into their food, and on January 4th the Lords' conjuration was known at Windsor. The Mayor of London, some say, carried the intelligence to the King,² one of the royal retainers brought a similar story from the London stewes,³ while Rutland, a party to the plot, betrayed his associates.⁴ Henry acted with characteristic promptitude. He conveyed his four sons secretly to London that same night, and having placed them in security in the Tower, proceeded to rally the nation to his support. Meanwhile, Kent and Salisbury anticipated their attack on Windsor, only to find their quarry escaped. For a moment they seem to have hoped to raise the country in Richard's name, by rallying round the ex-Queen Isabella at Sonning and proclaiming her husband King once more, but the weight of public opinion was against them. Hoping for support in Wales and Chester, recently the stronghold of Richard's cause, they determined to make for the

¹ *Annales Henrici IV*, 311, *Chronicles of London*, 56, *Traison*, 62.

² *Chron. Henry IV*, 7.

³ *Eulogii Contin.*, 385-386, *English Chron.*, 20

⁴ *Traison*, 81; *Creton*, 402-404; *St. Denys*, II. 734. It may be that the French chroniclers, who hated Rutland, may be prejudiced in accusing him of treachery a second time, but their story is confirmed in part by an English chronicler writing some sixty years later (*English Chron.*, 20 Cf. *Brut*, 360, 546).

West, but while the two Earls lay in Cirencester town, with their followers encamped outside, their lodging was surrounded by the townsmen, who made them prisoners. Later in the day, popular passion being rekindled by an outbreak of fire attributed to the Earl's followers, the unsuccessful rebels were led out to immediate execution. Other conspirators fared no better. Despenser, who fled to Caerliff, took ship for France, but the sailors brought him into Bristol, where he fell a victim to the fury of the mob. Huntingdon, the last of the leaders, had never left London. When it was obvious that his friends had failed, he tried to escape down the Thames, but after many wanderings he fell into the hands of the Countess of Hereford, the King's mother-in-law, who after some resistance yielded to the demands of the Essex mob. At Pleshey "in the very place where the Duke of Gloucester had yielded himself to Richard, late King, he was beheaded by clowns and workmen".¹ Other conspirators of less note were executed more regularly at Oxford, and at Tyburn, while the Abbot of Westminster, Walden, ex-Archbishop of Canterbury, and Merks, ex-Bishop of Carlisle, were put on trial, but not executed. The nation as a whole had defeated the conspiracy, for by the time that Henry had collected his forces and had left London for Oxford, all was over. A few years later the conspirators might have won more support, but the memories of Richard's exactions were not as yet forgotten. Nevertheless, such an outbreak was an unpleasant reminder that the Lancastrian dynasty was not too secure, and the insurrection would seem to have struck the death-knell of the imprisoned Richard. According to a French chronicler Henry despatched a knight to murder the unfortunate prisoner so soon as he heard of the rising,² but there is nothing to confirm this assertion, and the story is confused and incorrect in detail. Yet the chroniclers almost unanimously agree that Richard died soon after the rising, and the juxtaposition of the two events was so striking, that many whispered that the death was not natural. The official version was that he starved himself to death in despair, on hearing of the massacre of his friends,³ but even then the story is generally told by the chroni-

¹ Usk, 42.

² Traison, 93-96. Cf. St. Denys, ii 837 840. Brut, 590-591, follows Traison.

³ *Annales Henrici iv.*, 330-331; Walsingham, ii 245-246, Otterbourne, 228-229; Traison, 104, Eulogia Contin, 738; English Chronicle, 21.

clers with the qualifying clause that it was so reported. Others said openly that he was starved to death.¹ Rumours were so freely circulated, that the Council advised the King to expose the body if he were indeed dead, though they assured him that they had no reason to believe that this was so. Acting on this hint, the Government ordered that the ex-King's body should be brought openly from Pontefract to London, the face being exposed, that all might recognise the corpse, which lay for two days in St. Paul's before removal for burial to the Dominican convent at Langley.

The revolution was now complete. The ex-King and the chief members of his party were dead, but this did not mean that Henry's troubles were over. He was to find, like William III. long after, that the party that brought him to the throne expected to control his policy as a reward for its services. At the head of this party stood the Earl of Northumberland, whose career had been as inconstant as that of all the other politicians of his age. Originally the opponent of John of Gaunt, who won him to his side by the gift of the Marshal's office, he had turned against his new friend when the rebellion of 1381 offered him the chance. His desertion of Richard had won the North for Henry when he landed at Ravenspur, indeed his influence had been all-important in carrying through the revolution, for the northern baronage now held the balance of political power. His brother Thomas Earl of Worcester, who had been one of those rewarded when Richard revenged himself on his enemies in 1397, and Ralph Lord Neville, who had received his Earldom of Westmorland on the same occasion, had likewise welcomed Henry when he landed in Yorkshire. Other lesser magnates such as Lords Willoughby, Roos, Darcy, and Beaumont had followed the lead given by the Percies.² That the Percy and Neville influence was a power to be counted with was evidenced by the offices conferred at the beginning of the reign. Northumberland was made Constable of England and Warden of the West March; Hotspur, his son, became Warden of the East March and Justiciar of Chester and North Wales; Westmorland was created Marshal of England, and Thomas Neville, Lord Furnival, received the

¹ Usk, 42, *Chron. Henry IV.*, 11, *Brut*, 360 Capgrave, 276, gives both stories

² Hardyng, 349-350.

Wardenship of Annandale and Lochmaben.¹ Side by side with this baronial party stood Archbishop Arundel in the royal councils. He could claim to be the new King's earliest supporter, for had he not formed one of the insignificant band which sailed for England on that project which was to end in the deposition of Richard II.? He had played a large part in the election of Henry, and it was doubtless due to him that the new King's religious policy became not only strictly orthodox but persecuting. Arundel looked upon heresy as a Churchman, but his arguments would receive additional point from the fact that the new Government had come in to a certain extent on the orthodox ticket, thanks to the suspicions that Richard favoured the Lollards. Despite aspersions cast on his orthodoxy at the beginning of his reign,² Henry treated the Lollards as his enemies from the first. Their "conventicles and congregations" caused anxiety, and it was found necessary to issue orders to the Mayor and Sheriffs of London to allow no unlicensed chaplain to preach within the City.³ In 1401 large numbers of Lollards congregated in London in anticipation of the meetings of Parliament and Convocation, in the hope perhaps of overawing those assemblies.⁴ Arundel accepted the challenge, and informed Convocation that the most important business for which it had been summoned was the suppression of heresy. Representatives of the King endorsed the Primate's words, and the clergy, thus encouraged, proceeded to draw up a strong petition, urging legislation against those who defied the authority of the Church. Parliament followed suit in much milder and fewer words. Convocation now summoned before it one William Sawtre, or Chartrys, to answer certain charges of heresy. Though he was ready to acknowledge that the Host was not only bread but also the Body of Christ, he refused to deny the possibility that the elements of true bread remained after consecration, and for this he was degraded from the priesthood on February 26th,⁵ while on the same day the King signed an order, addressed to the Mayor and Sheriffs of London, to burn the unfrocked priest, now amenable to

¹ *Foedera*, viii 89; *Rot. Scot.*, ii. 151-152, *Cal. of Patent Rolls (1399-1401)*, 12, 37, 358.

² *Annales Henrici IV*, 304, *Chronicles of London*, 52

³ *Cal. of Letter Book I*, 7-8.

⁴ *Usk*, 4. The editor has substituted Henry V. for Henry IV. without any authority.

⁵ Wilkins, *Concilia*, iii. 255-260; *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 411.

the arm of the secular law.¹ On March 2nd the temporal lords assembled in Parliament gave their consent,² and the sentence was forthwith carried out at Smithfield.³

Thus did the first Lollard martyr inaugurate the first period of persecution known in England. Execution by burning was a punishment for heresy known to the law,⁴ but no such case had occurred for nearly two centuries, and perhaps even then it was an isolated instance.⁵ Sawtre was executed evidently on the authority of an order in Council, based doubtless on the principle embodied in the Constitutions of Clarendon, that the clerk after condemnation by the ecclesiastical court should be handed over to be sentenced by the secular jurisdiction. The massing of discontented Lollards was probably more dangerous than the chroniclers liked to confess. So the execution was hurried on to strike fear into the hearts of heretics, and was followed up by the statute *De Haeretico Comburendo*. This enactment, published evidently before the dissolution of Parliament on March 10th,⁶ embodied the suggestion contained in the recent petition of Convocation. It empowered the Bishops to impose fines and imprisonments for heretical offences, and provided that a heretic, who refused to abjure his errors, or relapsed after having done so, should be handed over to the secular authorities to be burnt, so that the punishment might strike fear into the minds of others. The Commons begged that the execution of all penal statutes enacted, or to be enacted, in this Parliament might be postponed till Whitsuntide, so that all might know of their provisions and be forewarned,⁷ and for the time at least the threat was enough. Few men in that age possessed the courage of Sawtre, and many heretics hastened to abjure their errors at Paul's Cross, while in the following year Sir Lewis Clifford, long known as a supporter of the cause, thought it wise to return to the fold of orthodoxy, and to signalise his apostasy by handing to the Archbishop a summary of the tenets which his erstwhile friends believed. This confession of faith may be a little exaggerated, as it comes from a tainted source, but, if we are to believe it, the Lollards

¹ *Foedera*, viii. 178.

² *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 459

³ *Annales Henrici iv*, 336, Usk, 58, *Chron. Henry iv*, 22

⁴ *Britton*, ed F. M. Nichols (Oxford, 1865), i. 41-42.

⁵ A deacon who embraced Judaism was burnt at Oxford in 1222 (Wykes, 63).

⁶ See the thanks of the Commons, *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 466. ⁷ *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 479.

had travelled far since the days of Wycliffe, and now declared that the Church was nothing but the Synagogue of Satan, and that the Sacrament of the Altar was but a mouthful of bread with no life, nay more "a tower or pinnacle of Antichrist"¹

Heresy, however political in its methods it might become, was not the only problem which challenged solution. Of far more pressing importance were the dangers from without. France had watched the English revolution with anxiety, fearing for the safety of Richard's little Queen, but Henry strove to remove all such fears. He even went so far as to suggest a marriage alliance with the royal house of France. The attitude of the French Government was non-committal, but threatening. It seemed a splendid opportunity to win the residue of Guienne and add it to the royal domain, especially as the men of the Bordelais seemed ready to throw off their English allegiance when they heard of Richard's death.² Soon it was rumoured that the French intended to help the Scots, who saw an excellent chance of harassing their enemy. In November, 1399, a Scottish raid upon Wark Castle was defeated by Sir Thomas Umfraville, and in June, 1400, Henry retaliated by ordering a campaign, which was inspired by an invitation from the Scottish Earl of March, anxious to punish the heir of Scotland, David Duke of Rothesay, for repudiating his daughter to marry Margaret Douglas.³

In August, Henry made a demonstration in force before Edinburgh, and the Scots retired before him, "yet did they often issue forth from their lairs, and in lonely deserts and by-paths they slew and took prisoners very many of our men, doing us more harm than we did to them"⁴. Before the end of the month the English were back in their own territory, and shortly after, a truce was signed for six weeks, to be later prolonged for a year. On his way back from Scotland in September, 1400, Henry heard of further complications in Wales, where perhaps relics of loyalty to Richard still survived. Owing to the attitude of both the officials of the new dynasty and the lords of the Marches, there

¹ Walsingham, ii. 252-253.

² Froissart (ed. Kervyn), xvi. 212-217

³ Royal Letters, i. 23-24, 28-30; Ordinances, i. 114-115, Foedera, viii. 131-133, 149, 150.

⁴ Usk, 47.

existed much ill-feeling between Celt and English ; the troubles here started with a personal quarrel between Reginald Lord Grey of Ruthyn, and Owen Glendower, the most powerful native gentleman in North Wales, who claimed descent from the royal house of Jorwerth, and was the most popular personage in the land, owing to his lavish hospitality, his patronage of bards, and his ready wit. Owen had been revenging old grudges by raiding Grey's lands. The marcher denounced him as a rebel, and induced the King to turn against Wales on his way back from Scotland. This drove Owen into open revolt. Henry tried to punish the rebels, but had to retire for lack of provisions, leaving Owen still angry and still unsubdued.¹

Thus North, South, and West the Lancastrian dynasty was threatened, and Henry was beginning to realise how very slender were his resources. When Parliament met in 1401 therefore his financial position was desperate. The estimates for the coming year were placed at £130,000, not counting wardrobe expenses, which stood at £16,000 for the past year. Moreover, the King was in debt, thanks to the extraordinary expenses incurred in suppressing revolt, fitting out expeditions to Scotland and Wales, and maintaining the defences of Calais and Guienne.² This lack of means gave Parliament its opportunity. Hitherto it had largely been a colourless body which went with the tide and supported the party in power with unfailing complacency. It had been called at all crises, but only to record changes and revolutions which other forces had produced. The "Good Parliament" of 1376 was quite as much the sport of outside influences as the "Merciless Parliament" of 1388, or the Parliament of 1397 which deliberated under the menace of Richard's archers. Yet, although the constitutional harangues of a Thomas of Lancaster or a Thomas of Gloucester might mean nothing at the time they were made, they did create a precedent and a tradition for the time when Parliament could show itself independent. The constitutional language used at the deposition of Richard II. was now made a reality by the poverty of the Lancastrian Kings. English Kings had long ceased to be able to "live of their own," but now the insecurity of Henry's position made Parliament able to demand that royal concessions should be the price of "supply".

¹ *Chron. Henry iv*, 20-21, *Annales Henrici iv*, 333-334; *Usk*, 47.

² *Rot. Parl.*, iii 454; *Ordinances*, i 154, ii. 57.

This newly acquired parliamentary independence found clear expression in the Parliament of 1401. The Speaker, Sir Arnold Savage, proved to be possessed of unusual eloquence, which he used so constantly in the King's presence as to compel the unfortunate Henry to protest that further messages from Parliament must be included in the formal list of petitions. But the loquacious Speaker managed to obtain the King's promise that he would not send down matters of great importance to be discussed in the "dog days," when the session was near its close, and more, that he would listen to no unauthorised reports of the proceedings of the House, as these might prejudice him against certain individuals.¹ Thus were laid the foundations of the right of freedom of speech so grievously threatened by the case of Haxey in 1397.² But the most interesting of their requests was that which asked that royal answers to petitions should be given before money was voted. The King refused his consent,³ but the petition is a sign-post pointing towards parliamentary supremacy.

Though the Commons made a fairly liberal grant, and Convocation followed suit, Henry's troubles were by no means over. Protracted negotiations were being conducted with Scotland, and since the previous May attempts had been made to secure peace with France, on the basis of Isabella's restoration to her relatives. The King had some hopes that he would obtain the little ex-Queen as a bride for his eldest son, but the French had no such intention, and in July Isabella was handed over with her jewels, but without her dowry. If Henry thought that he was thus securing himself from attack on the South he was grievously mistaken. English and French sailors still fought in the Channel,⁴ in June the Council had to discuss the advisability of declaring war on France.⁵ Ready to harass the English King in every possible way, the French were soon in correspondence with both the Scots and Owen Glendower. The latter's rebellion was reaching serious proportions, as he was doing his utmost to stir up a war of the Celt against the Saxon.⁶ Welsh students at Oxford and Welsh labourers working in England

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 455-456.

² Haxey's case had been annulled by Richard and reannulled in 1399 (Rot. Parl., iii. 430, 434).

³ *Ibid.*, 458.

⁴ Usk, 69

⁵ Ordinances, i 143-145

⁶ See his letters to the Scottish King and Irish chiefs, Usk, 71-74.

were flocking home to rally round their leader. In Wales the inhabitants were neglecting their fields, selling their stock to buy weapons, and meeting secretly to plan the overthrow of English domination.¹ On April 1st, 1401, Owen took by surprise Conway Castle, one of the main bulwarks of North Wales. Parliament refused to listen to the warnings of the Bishop of St Asaph, who realized the magnitude of the danger, believing as it did that stern coercion would soon bring these "barefooted knaves" to reason. Even Henry shared his feeling, for when in June, 1401, he went to Worcester preparatory to a punitive expedition, he wrote to the Council that though he thought it wise to see to the matter in person, the rebels were men of no importance.² The Prince of Wales and Harry Hotspur were in command in Wales, and through their efforts Conway was regained, a success which induced the King to return to London. Renewed disturbances called Henry westwards again in September, when he is said to have penetrated as far as Anglesey, but he was back in London on November 1st, when immediately came the news that Owen was flaunting his dragon standard before the walls of Carnarvon on his way to besiege Harlech. To add to these troubles, Ireland was once more in a state of anarchy,³ and it was found necessary to send over a member of the royal family, the King's son Thomas, as Lieutenant. At home too, there were not wanting signs that the enthusiasm which had greeted Henry's accession was waning. The plague had reappeared in 1400, more particularly in the North, and in 1401 a failure of the crops sent up the price of wheat to about three times its normal value. The scarcity was so great, that it was proposed in Council to remit the duty on imported corn, but the necessities of the Government were such as to make this impossible. Most people were doubtless ignorant of this refusal to grant relief, but they had plenty of opportunities to fan each other's grievances in the penitential processions organised by the ecclesiastical authorities. The parliamentary subsidies of 1401 were raised amid "murmuring and smothered curses of clergy and people".⁴ At Norton St. Philip in

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 457, Ellis, *Letters*, 2nd Series, i. 8-9.

² Ordinances, i. 132-135, ii. 54-55, *Chron. Henry IV*, 24-25.

³ Rebellion had broken out immediately after the deposition of Richard II. (Proceedings of the King's Council in Ireland (Rolls Series, 1877), 261-269).

⁴ Usk, 60.

Somersetshire the King's tax-gatherer was slain by the cloth merchants in open market, at Dartmouth one of his fellows saved his skin only by escaping to sea in a boat, and "at Bristol the wives, acting the part of their husbands, gave the gatherers a like rebuff, sometimes giving and receiving wounds".¹ Men had begun to find that the millennium had not come with the change of dynasty, that the fair promises of reform were as far from fulfilment as ever,² and that royal officials still purveyed goods and refused to pay for them.

Henry's popularity was waning. In September he narrowly escaped death from an infernal machine with poisoned spikes, surreptitiously introduced into his bed, and, surer sign than all, men began to whisper that the late King was not dead. "The peple of this land began to grucche against Kyng Harri, and beer him hevy . . . and desirid to have again Kyng Richaid. Also lettris cam to certayn frendis of Kyng Richard, as they hadde be sent from hymself, and saide that he was alive; wheroft moche peple was glad and desirid to have him Kynge again."³ A stranger wandering in the Western Hebrides, having been identified as Richard, was sent over to the Scottish Court, and the news was welcomed with delight by Richard's friends. Emissaries went about England urging men to rise in arms to support King Richard, more particularly certain Friars, who met death in the spirit of martyrdom. Public opinion was decidedly on their side, for when some of them were accused of treason in London, two juries, drawn from the City and from Holborn respectively, refused to convict, and one empanelled from Highgate and Islington did so only to repent and come weeping to confess its error to the surviving Friars after the execution.⁴ This outbreak of sedition was the more serious, in that the rebels were said to be in communication with Owen Glendower, and that the Scots were ready to make use of the pretender. Moreover, Charles VI commissioned one of Richard's French friends to go to Scotland and find out the truth of the rumour.⁵ The authorities in England

¹ Usk, 62, Cal. of Patent Rolls (1401-1405), 516-517.

² See the letter of Repyngdon to the King in Usk, 65-69.

³ *English Chron.*, 23, translating *Eulogii Contin.*, 389-390.

⁴ *Eulogii Contin.*, 393.

⁵ Documents in *Archæologia*, xxviii 94-95. The envoy was the Chronicler Creton, and payment was not made to him till 1410, but there is reason to believe that his mission took place in 1402. See *ibid.*, 80-81. It seems that Creton was quite assured that Richard was dead. See his letter to the Duke of Burgundy, *ibid.*, 91-94.

threw scorn on the whole matter. The pretender was said to be a certain Thomas Warde of Tumpington, and was soon known as the "idol," or the "mamaet of Scotland," even Scottish chroniclers believing him to be mad¹. But he was none the less a useful weapon to use against Henry, and the other events of 1402 did little to improve the outlook. In Wales, Owen having defeated and captured Lord Grey in the Spring, carried his triumph further in June, when Sir Edmund Mortimer, the uncle of the Earl of March, was defeated in battle at Pilleth and fell into his hands. A retaliatory raid into Wales by the King in person failed lamentably in September, thanks to the fabian tactics of the Welsh and the foul weather. On the Scottish border the English record was more encouraging. In September a Scottish raiding force under the Earl of Douglas and Murdoch Stewart, the son of the Duke of Albany, was intercepted by the Percies at Humbleton Hill. An hour's battle, in which the tactics of Dupplin Moor and Hallidon Hill were repeated, ended in the utter defeat of the Scots, who never reached the English men-at-arms, thanks to the heavy arrow flight; "not a noble, knight, or squire advanced a foot till the Scots had been routed by the archers". Many Scottish nobles, including the two leaders with several French knights, were among the captives.² There was thus one item of good news to report to the Parliament that met on September 30th, but the Chancellor had to acknowledge that "God was punishing this kingdom in divers manners". Henry had borrowed large sums for current expenses, and Parliament was found ready to supply his need, but the prevalent uneasiness was reflected by the long list of petitions, which included a complaint that soldiers had been impressed and not paid for the recent Welsh campaign, and that the right of purveyance was still abused.

The pent-up storm was about to burst. Henry was growing suspicious of the loyalty of Edmund Mortimer, and believing his capture by Glendower to be collusive, refused to ransom him, with the result that the prisoner by contracting a marriage alliance with his captor's daughter became an open rebel, and in December he announced that he meant to proclaim Richard, or in default the

¹ Wyntoun, iii. 76.

² *Annales Henrici iv.*, 344-347; Otterbourne, 236-238, *Chron. Henry iv.*, 28-29, Rot. Parl., iii. 487, *Scotichronicon*, ii. 433-435, Wyntoun, iii. 85-86

rightful heir, his own nephew the Earl of March.¹ This action naturally affected the Percies, not only because Hotspur was Mortimer's brother-in-law, but even more because he had a quarrel of his own with the King, who, he complained bitterly in 1401, had left him without supplies for the Welsh war, and who now demanded the surrender of the Earl of Douglas who had been captured at Humbleton Hill. His father, the Earl of Northumberland, appeared on friendly terms with Henry at the Parliament of 1402, but he too was beginning to press for money. In May, 1403, while he was beleaguering the border Castle of Ormiston, he wrote to ask that the arrears due to him and his son should be paid, denying in a second letter that he and Hotspur had between them received £60,000 since the beginning of the reign, and averring that £20,000 was still due.² Though the Percies had certainly received some £40,000 or so, quite apart from the gifts of estates, they had done much hard work for the new dynasty. But their lot was no worse than that of others. Rutland, now Duke of York, in Aquitaine, the King's private Secretary, and even the King's sons, Henry in Wales and Thomas in Ireland, all complained of arrears unpaid.³ Despite the grants of Parliament, Henry had to levy a forced loan to pay the garrisons in South Wales. The breach between Henry and his erstwhile supporters was widening. Full of plans for a new invasion of Wales, he was journeying north to help the Percies reduce the border to order,⁴ when he learnt that Hotspur was in arms, but not against the Scots, for since July 9th he had been distributing Richard's badge of the White Hart in Cheshire.⁵ The rebellion was spreading rapidly. Glendower was boldly pushing forward,⁶ Douglas, as representing the Scots, had thrown in his lot with his recent gaoler,⁷ even Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester, joined his discontented kinsmen.⁸ It seemed as though Henry would be swept away by this combination of English rebels and Welsh and Scottish enemies. A serious indictment against him

¹ Ellis, *Letters*, 2nd Series, i. 24-26

² Wyntoun, iii. 89-90; *Scotichronicon*, ii. 435-436; *Ordinances*, i. 203-205.

³ *Ordinances*, ii. 62-63, 68, 69-70, 78-79; *Royal Letters*, i. 85-88.

⁴ Letter to the Council dated July 10th, *Ordinances*, i. 206-207.

⁵ Traison, Appendix C., 284, *Annales Henrici iv*, 361, *Elogii Contin.*, 396.

⁶ *Royal Letters*, i. 138-151.

⁷ Wyntoun, iii. 90; Otterbourne, 241.

⁸ Otterbourne, 240.

was issued by his English opponents. They averred that he had usurped the throne ; though he had sworn at Doncaster that Richard should not be deposed, he had starved him to death and then ignored the prior claims of the Earl of March as his successor. Despite promises to the contrary, he had wrung taxes and tallages from the people, and had influenced elections to secure a Parliament in his favour. The only personal grievance mentioned was the refusal to ransom Mortimer. No allusion it will be noticed was made to the pseudo-Richard in Scotland, the Percies had been in all Henry's secrets, and knew that the late King was certainly dead.¹ The position seemed desperate save for one fact. The forces of the enemy were divided. The Scots had not had time to move, Northumberland was still raising levies in the North, Owen was far away in South Wales, Hotspur was in Cheshire. With characteristic promptitude Henry called up soldiers, but many cannot have joined his standard when he advanced to intercept Hotspur, who was marching south to join the Welsh. At Shrewsbury, which refused the rebels admission, the two armies met. On the following day, July 21st, royalists and rebels put their quarrel to the test of battle in Hateleyfield, about three miles north of the town. The fight was long and furious. In its earlier stages the rebels gained some advantage, thanks to their splendid Cheshire bowmen, but in the end the King and the Prince of Wales surrounded their opponents, whose resistance collapsed towards evening when it was known that Hotspur had fallen. Thus ended "one of the wyrste bataylys that eyr came to Inglonde and unkyndyst".² The ringleaders, including the Earl of Worcester, were executed, but the Earl of Northumberland was still at large and marching southwards. Westmorland, his brother-in-law, who had refused to join his northern neighbours in their plot, was sent against him, but the Earl agreed to yield, and in a personal interview with Henry at York was pardoned, though he was kept under restraint and ordered to surrender his castles.

The battle of Shrewsbury marks the final decline of Henry's short-lived popularity. Thanks to his determined spirit and to the lack of cohesion among his opponents, he had been able to defend

¹ Nevertheless, use was made of the story in an unofficial manner (*Annales Hen. II., 35.*)

² Gregory, 103.

his position, but the insecurity of the Lancastrian dynasty was made amply manifest. Had they possessed an efficient leader, the rebels must have triumphed, but Hotspur was no statesman, his father was a vacillating and unconvincing plotter, while not much enthusiasm could be aroused for the possible claimants to the throne. Neither the lunatic pretender in Scotland nor the eleven-year-old Earl of March was likely to strike popular imagination. Indeed the nation as a whole was beginning to retire from dynastic politics, to leave the field open for that struggle between great men which ultimately developed into the War of the Roses. Slowly it came to realise that the tax-gatherer and the purveyor were permanent phenomena whoever occupied the throne, and its endeavours were concentrated more on wringing concessions from an embarrassed King than on removing one ruler to substitute another.

On his return from York, Henry had to go again to Wales, where, though checked in one engagement, Glendower was more than holding his own. Piteous appeals for help reached the King and his Council from the upholders of the English cause in South Wales and the Marches, but royal intervention was of little avail. In September "the King entered Wales and quickly returned since the country was impassable for horses"¹. At the same time, though a truce had been sealed between France and England, and further negotiations were proceeding, this did not prevent a continuance of open if unofficial warfare. The Duke of Orléans in his private capacity had defied Henry in due form, and in October he proceeded to invade Guienne, while his uncle and rival the Duke of Burgundy prepared to besiege Calais.² Privateers from both countries were fighting in the Channel, where for some time the peaceful merchant had been the prey of the pirates, the English sailors being just as aggressive as the French. Indeed almost every maritime district had cause to complain of English depredations,³ Castilian, Portuguese, Flemish, and Hansa merchants besides those of France being the sufferers. Retaliation on the part of French and Bretons became serious in 1403. The latter had been stirred to action by Olivier de Clisson, the avowed enemy of England, and Henry failed to get any hold on the duchy by marrying the regent, the Duchess Joan, whose subjects expelled her at once. In July

¹ *Eulogia Contin.*, 398.

² *Foedera*, viii. 336.

³ *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 539

a Breton fleet won a victory off St. Mahé, the scene of the English triumph of 1293, and then swooped down on the Channel Islands, and landing on the mainland burnt Plymouth, whence they were only driven after a great conflict.¹ It was found necessary to provide a convoy for the Bristol merchantmen sailing for Bordeaux,² and a fleet fitted out under Sir William Wilford met with some success on the Breton coast. The year, however, closed with the news that the Count of St. Pol had landed in the Isle of Wight, though the people had risen and driven him back to his ships.

These troubles were more harassing than dangerous. A systematic invasion of Wales would have reduced Glendower for good and all, if command of the sea had been first secured, and the quarrels of Burgundy and Orleans made French intervention in English affairs only an intermittent, if not quite a negligible, danger. But Henry by his neglect of all things naval had lost command of the sea, and he found the high rate of soldiers' wages—a shilling a day for men-at-arms and sixpence a day for archers—a serious stumbling-block towards equipping a really efficient army. Thus while England was at war throughout 1404-1406, the campaigns, if such they can be called, are only important for their indirect influence on the Crown, by the drain caused on its resources. Meanwhile, on the borders of Gascony the French steadily pushed forward, though more dangerous seemed to be the assistance they gave to the Welsh rebels. Early in the year a French fleet assisted in the siege of Carnarvon and Hailech, and Owen's embassy to Paris for further assistance resulted in a definite alliance signed on June 14th.³ The material help afforded to Glendower by this alliance was slight, as the expedition destined to his aid spent itself in a useless descent upon Falmouth, but for some time Owen more than held his own against the Prince of Wales, who as usual was ill supplied with money. However, in March, 1405, the English forces won a fairly decisive victory at Usk, where Owen's son was captured, an event from which the chronicler dates the decay of the Welsh chieftain's power.⁴ The King intended to

¹ St. Denys, iii. 104-114, Royal Letters, i. 167-168, 220, *Annales Henrici iv*, 375, *Chronicles of London*, 63-64; *Eulogia Contin*, 395.

² *Foedera*, viii. 235-236.

³ St. Denys, iii. 164-168; *Foedera*, viii. 356, 365-368.

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⁴ Usk, 103.

follow up this success in person, but more pressing concerns called him off on the eve of departure,¹ and it was not till September that he was able to make a short and quite inglorious incursion into the Principality of France, though suffering from the quarrels of Orleans and Burgundy, still managed to annoy her neighbour by an unsuccessful attack on the castle of Merk, an outwork of Calais, and by sending a considerable force under the Marshal de Rieux to help Glendower. This expedition landed at Milford early in August, 1405, and though it failed before Haverford West and Tenby, and had its ships taken by an English fleet, helped to reduce Carmarthen and Cardigan, but returned to France in November, save a small band, which, owing to a lack of ships, had to wait till the following spring.²

During all this time Henry had been hampered by Parliament, which in the session of January, 1404, showed little enthusiasm for the Lancastrian dynasty, manifesting no anger at the recent treachery of the Percies, and begging the King to deal leniently with Northumberland. Nor was it interested in the war, except so far as the piracy in the Channel affected the commercial classes, and so far as it was a weapon wherewith to threaten the King, but it did show a determined readiness to pick holes in domestic administration. The Speaker, in the name of the Commons, complained of the mismanagement of the Crown lands, the lavish bestowal of annuities, and the heavy expenses of the royal household, with more than a hint that no money would be forthcoming unless these complaints were attended to. As a result, four of the King's attendants, including his Confessor, were removed, and most of the foreigners at Court were ordered home, including all the Queen's Breton train save her two daughters. Certain revenues, estimated to yield £12,100 per annum, were allocated to the expenses of the household, excluding the Chamber and Great Wardrobe. To all this the King gave a smiling consent, owning that the household had been extravagantly run, and bowing to the desires of his Parliament in every way.³ Cheered by this success Parliament proceeded to claim, as of ancient right, the immunity

¹ Ordinances, i. 251-253.

² St. Denys, iii. 322-328; Ursins, 437; Monstrelet, i. 81-84; *Annales Henrici iv*, 415.

³ Rot. Parl., iii. 523-525, 527-529, 541, 542; *Chron. Henry iv*, 36-39.

of members and their attendants from arrest while attending to their parliamentary duties, but the great battle of the session was over the question of supply. The Commons, living up to past traditions, refused to believe that the ordinary revenue would not cover all expenses. They reminded the King that he possessed the full revenue of the Crown, including the customs so largely enhanced in King Richard's day, the Duchy of Lancaster, and the wardship of the estates of such nobles as were under age. To this Henry stoutly retorted that he must have a grant as well; in the matter of money he could not afford to give way. Only a few months previously he had been obliged to ask the clergy to make him a special grant for the Welsh war, and quite apart from questions of extravagance, the rebellion in Wales had deprived him of an annual £60,000 usually raised in that country.¹ At length Parliament agreed to vote an entirely new form of subsidy, consisting of one shilling in the pound on the annual rental of all lands and tenements, and the same sum on every pound's worth of movables, but the grant was not to be taken as a precedent, all the records relating to the levy were to be destroyed, and the moneys thus collected were to be paid to special commissioners, and not expended on other purposes than the war.² It is evident that the Commons were intensely suspicious of royal book-keeping.

The carping, not to say hostile, attitude of Parliament was not calculated to strengthen Henry's position in the country, and it is significant that letters purporting to come from Richard II. were laid before the House. It was this perhaps, as well as the sullen and dangerous demeanour of the Percies, which took Henry to the North in the early summer, where he was fortunate enough to seize and execute a certain William Serle, who was believed to have been one of those who carried out the murder of Thomas of Gloucester at Calais. According to his own confession he was the author of the letters purporting to come from Richard, which had been spread broadcast over England during the last few years, and he owned that though there was a man in Scotland much resembling Richard, he was not really the ex-King.³ Though it is not quite true to say

¹ Ush., 86.

² *Annales Henrici IV*, 379-381, Otterbourne, 246-247; Cal. of Letter Book I, 28.

³ *Elogii Contin.*, 402; *English Chron.*, 30; Ush., 85; Cal. of Letter Book I, 34.

with the chronicler that the execution of Serle struck a death-blow to the story that Richard still lived,¹ it does mark the end of the period when this rumour proved a real danger. The second Parliament of 1404 met at Coventry. This assembly earned the name of "unlearned" from contemporaries, owing to the fact that Henry issued orders that no lawyers were to be returned. The unprincipled behaviour of lawyers in Parliament had been a matter of comment in Edward III.'s day, and so recently as 1402 the Commons had spoken in strong terms of their ignorance, falseness, and deceit,² but Henry's action may have been due to anti-clerical influences, lawyer and cleric being closely allied though not always identical, and one chronicler is led to describe the Coventry assembly as a "lay Parliament".³ At any rate strong anticlerical prejudice began to appear, so soon as the Chancellor had apologetically pointed out that the supplies recently voted were exhausted. In reply the Commons suggested that besides the old proposals of resuming the Crown lands and suspending the payment of royal pensions, all, or at least some, of the clerical possessions should be seized for one year. For some time Parliament had been casting envious eyes on the wealth of the Church, and though the idea of partial or complete disendowment undoubtedly owed its origin to the writings of Wycliffe, and to the preaching of his followers, it cannot be said that all those who advocated such a course were Lollards. The party which advised the confiscation of clerical property was largely recruited from those who desired to transfer the burden of taxation from their own shoulders, or from such courtiers as found that this was the only way they would be able to secure the continuance of their salaries.⁴ The purely spiritual idea originated by Wycliffe was doomed to failure by the fact that politicians had taken it up for their own ends. Archbishop Arundel, supported by the whole bench of bishops, easily defeated the present proposition, by showing that in recent years the clergy had shown greater liberality in voting money than the Commons.⁵ Instead the King secured a double subsidy, the renewal of the customs duties for two years, and a confirmation of the land tax, though in return he had to

¹ *Annales Henrici iv.*, 391.

² *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 504.

³ Otterbourne, 250

⁴ *Annales Henrici iv.*, 373.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 391-394, Walsingham, ii. 265-267
Wilkins, *Concilia*, iii. 279-281.

For clerical grants in 1404 see

promise to appoint a commission to inquire into the alienations of Crown property since 1367.¹

Parliamentary difficulties were over for the present, but heavy clouds were gathering once more on the political horizon. The rumblings of the approaching storm were heard in February, 1405, when an attempt was made to smuggle away the two Mortimer boys from Windsor. They were quickly recaptured, but not before it appeared that they were being taken to Wales, so that with the help of Glendower and their rebel uncle "thei myte rejoysse the crowne, as the iit eyeres of Ynglond".² Consequent inquiry revealed much disloyalty among the most trusted advisers of the King. It was his own cousin, Constance of York, who had organised the escape of the young Mortimers, and was captured with them. When she appeared before the Council on February 17th, she threw all the blame on her brother the Duke of York (the Aumâle of earlier days), whom she accused of plotting the death of the King. The young Earl of Nottingham, son of Henry's old antagonist in the lists at Coventry, was likewise implicated, and even Archbishop Arundel fell under suspicion, and had to take a solemn oath denying all knowledge of the conspiracy.³ Nottingham was forgiven, but the lady was imprisoned in Kenilworth Castle, and York was sent to Pevensey where he remained in custody for "seventeen weeks or more," though by June he was once more at large and in the King's service.

The main storm burst in April. Northumberland's name had not been mentioned in the Mortimer plot, indeed he was at the moment far more loyal than he had been for some time. This in itself was an evil omen, for he was beginning once more to sign himself affectionately "Your Mattathias" in his letters to the King, just as he had done on the eve of the 1403 rebellion.⁴ On March 22nd he was present at the Council board at Westminster, but by April disquieting rumours caused the appointment of a special Commission of Oyer and Terminer in the North.⁵ This may have concerned the Earl's attempt to seize his rival Westmorland as he lay in the castle of Sir Ralph Viner on the Scottish border.⁶ In any case by April

¹ Rot. Parl., iii 546, 549.

² Capgrave, 288-289.

³ *Annales Henrici II.*, 398-399; Walsingham, ii. 68; *Eulogii Contin.*, 402
Otterbourne, 250; Documents in Dugdale, *Monasticon*, vi. 355

⁴ Ordinances, ii. 103-104. Cf. i. 204-205.

⁵ Cal. of Patent Rolls (1405-1408), 59

⁶ *Annales Henrici II.*, 400.

25th the King had hastened north as far as Pontefract, whence he issued writs empowering certain persons to receive into the King's grace such people as had adhered to “Henry late Duke of Northumberland, rebel and traitor, in his last coming into England”.¹ The trouble seems to have died down, for Henry turned back, and on May 8th was at Worcester, contemplating an invasion of Wales. Here he received news that Lord Bardolf, a magnate of the Eastern Counties bound by close ties to the Percy interest, had slipped away to the North instead of serving in Wales. By the 28th the King was at Derby once more on his way northwards, fully aware that rebellion was now openly avowed by Northumberland, Bardolf, and the lately pardoned Nottingham. These men were all out for private ends. Northumberland and Bardolf had both been in arms before. Nottingham was the heir of Henry's old rival of 1397, Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. But a more popular and sensational element was introduced into the rising by the adherence of Scrope, Archbishop of York, a man beloved by his Yorkshire flock. There is every reason to believe that Scrope was an honest opponent of Government policy. He subscribed to, if he did not actually draw up, a manifesto demanding the summons of a free and open Parliament representing all the estates, at which steps should be taken to reform the government, in view of the intolerable burdens laid on the clergy and the oppression which weighed on all classes, to protect men from being wrongfully deprived of their lands, to remove the heavy burdens laid by taxation and legislation on gentles, merchants, and commons, to punish the prodigal use of money wrung from the many for the benefit of the few, to prosecute the war against external enemies, and to protect trade. Further the Welsh had promised that they would gladly submit to English rule if these reforms were carried out.² Apart from an obvious allusion to Nottingham's loss of his paternal inheritance, this manifesto is eminently popular in tone. It is a protest against Henry's recent interference in parliamentary elections and his extravagance, it places the grievances of the middle class and the merchants in the forefront, and if it hints at an understanding with the Welsh rebels, it is not in any sense unpatriotic. Above all it emphasises the grievances of the clergy, and perhaps here it solves the problem of Scrope's disloyalty.

¹ *Foedera*, viii. 394-395

² *Annales Henrici iv*, 402-405, translating the original English document. Cf. *Elogii Contin.*, 405-406; *Chron. Hen. iv.*, 44, Capgrave, 289.

Under the leadership of their Archbishop the men of York sallied out of the city, together with Nottingham, who had hastily raised a force as he marched north¹—in all some eight or nine thousand strong. At Shipton they were met by Westmorland and the King's son John, who had already routed a body of insurgents at Topcliffe, near Thirsk. There on May 29th Westmorland opened negotiations, as a result of which Scrope, Nottingham, and three other leaders agreed to lay down their arms. Most of the chroniclers tell how Westmorland secured his end by pretending sympathy with the demands of the rebels, only to arrest the leaders when their followers had dispersed. Be this as it may, Scrope and Nottingham were taken under escort to Pontefract, which the King reached on June 3rd.² Henry advanced to the Archbishop's Palace at Bishopthorpe, two miles from York, and ordered the prisoners to be brought on thither. Though Archbishop Arundel arrived in haste to urge the King to hold his hand against a brother primate, Henry prevaricated.³ He induced the Archbishop to breakfast with him, and in the meantime, as Sir William Gascoigne, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, refused to pass sentence on a prelate and a peer, neither of whom came under his jurisdiction, an informal court, presided over by the Earl of Arundel and Sir Thomas Beaufort, assisted perhaps by Sir William Fulthorpe, condemned the unfortunate men to death without any pretence of trial.⁴ The heads of Scrope, Nottingham, and two knights fell under the headsman's axe that same morning in the fields hard by the city walls.

Northumberland had been playing the usual coward's game, negotiating for Scottish and French help,⁵ but raising not a finger to assist the Yorkshire rebels. Now with Bardolf he retreated before the King, who advanced against the northern castles Warkworth, Berwick, and Alnwick found it impossible to withstand the siege-cannon brought up against them, and by the end of July, the two faint-hearted leaders having taken refuge in Scotland, all resistance had ceased.

¹ *Ordinances*, i 264.

² *Foedera*, viii 398.

³ *Annales Henrici iv.*, 408-409; *Eulogia Contin.*, 407

⁴ Gascoigne, *Loci e Libro Veritatum*, 225-226, *Chron. Hen. iv.*, 45, *Annales Henrici iv.*, 409

⁵ Rot. Parl., iii. 605.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TRIUMPH OF HENRY IV AND THE STRUGGLE OF PARTIES
(1405-1413)

THE suppression of the Scrope rebellion marks a turning-point in the reign. From this time forward the dynasty was secure. It is true that many were aghast at the execution of an archbishop, the news of which spread even to the far North, where it was considered worthy of record in the Icelandic Annals¹. Pilgrimages were made to Scrope's tomb in York Minster, his remains began to perform miracles, and men noted with superstitious awe that the field of his execution brought forth a crop such as had not been seen for many a year². Aundel took to his bed with grief, and men began to whisper darkly that the judgment of God had fallen on the King. As he rode north from York in a blinding storm, he felt as though a blow had been struck him, and during the night, as he lay at Green Hammerton, he woke up with the cry "Traitors! ye have thrown fire over me". He entered Ripon next day a very sick man, and had to retire to bed for a week, at the end of which an eruption had broken out on his face and hands.³ The disease, whether leprosy or not, was beyond the medical resources of the age to cure, though the attacks were apparently intermittent and between whiles his health was normal. Considering his adventurous youth and the stormy trials of his five years of kingship, the attack is not inexplicable, but it was a sad reward to see the joy of life fade away just when the clouds were clearing from his sky. It was perhaps impossible for his enemies to refrain from using the coincidence of his illness with the death of Scrope to point a moral. Still, had it not been for the suspicion of

¹ Íslenskir Annálar, 380.² *Annales Henrici iv.*, 409-410, *Chron. Hen. iv.*, 49³ Gascoigne, *Loci e Libro Veritatum*, 228 (the report of an eyewitness). Cf. another account in *Anglia Sacra*, II. 370-371.

treachery on the part of Westmorland, little fault could have been found with the King's action on moral grounds. Sciope and Nottingham were taken in arms against the King, they were in alliance with the arch-traitor Northumberland and marching to join his forces. If they had not been allowed legal trial, this was an unusual luxury in days of turmoil. While we may not be able to refrain from dropping a tear on the grave of one whose rectitude of life was crowned by dignity in its last moments, we must confess that his execution was not the result of a sudden access of blind rage on the part of the King, not even "a sign of a mind and moral power already decaying,"¹ but a deliberate act of what Henry believed to be justice.

The success of this forceful action is seen in the way the power of Henry's enemies, both within and without the kingdom, dwindled from this time forward. The constant pressure of the English arms wore down Owen Glendower in Wales, where the King's presence was never again necessary, though his eldest son was commissioned, at the request of Parliament, to be in continual command there.² In 1406 Owen lost another son in battle, and so obvious was the English success during the years 1406-1407, that the Prince of Wales was personally thanked in Parliament for his services, though a slight check had been recently experienced by the loss of Aberystwith Castle within a few days of its capture. In 1406 the fugitive Earl of Northumberland visited Wales, but his presence failed to improve Welsh prospects, despite the fears of Parliament, though it was probably at this time that he signed a solemn deed with Owen and Sir Edmund Mortimer for the division of England and Wales between them—when they should have conquered it.³ In July, 1408, the Prince, moving from Hereford, started a campaign which ended in the fall of Aberystwith, and of Harlech early in 1409. During the siege of this last castle Sir Edmund Mortimer, who had conducted the defence, died, and his wife, Glendower's daughter, her children, and her mother fell into English hands. Wales was still in a very disturbed state, but organised rebellion was over, for Glendower was little more than a fugitive, wandering from place to place, and hiding in caves and thickets, till his death in 1415.⁴

¹ Stubbs, iii. 52.

² Rot. Parl., iii. 569

³ Ascribed to 1405 in *Chron. Hen. IV.*, 40-41. It seems, however, to be referred to in Rot. Parl., iii. 606.

⁴ Usk, 129.

The rebellion, which he had led, had been crushed by the steady perseverance of Henry IV and his son. Indeed the Welsh rising had only been formidable because of its threatened combination with English revolts. This danger too had now passed, though in 1408 Northumberland made one last poor effort. Failing to receive a very warm reception in Scotland, Bardolf and he had wandered not only to Wales but also to France in the hope of assistance. Back in Scotland in the summer of 1407, they determined once more to try their fortunes in England in the vain hope of raising the country in the name of King Richard, though the Earl had never seen the "phantom" during his stay in Scotland. They took too seriously perhaps the encouragement of certain Scottish nobles, "Go forth, for England is with you".¹ Crossing the Border in February, they advanced into Yorkshire, being joined by a small body of the disaffected, many of them clerics,² who had doubtless not forgiven the death of Scrope, but they were easily defeated on Bramham Moor, near Tadcaster, by Sir Thomas Rokeby, Sheriff of the county, who it is said had encouraged their invasion. Both Northumberland and Bardolf were slain, and in the summer Henry stamped out the last sparks of sedition in the North.

The Scottish Government had discouraged this last vain venture of Northumberland,³ as Henry now held a valuable hostage for the good behaviour of the Scots. King Robert III., realising that his end was near and fearing for the safety of his heir, Prince James, (David of Rothesay was long dead) amid the party turmoils of his kingdom, had despatched him secretly to France, but as his ship was passing Flamborough Head it was captured on Palm Sunday, 1406, by some sailors of Cley in Norfolk, who handed over the prisoners to their King. Though a Scottish chronicler waxed sarcastic on the way Englishmen ever had of forgetting about truces when convenient to do so,⁴ and an English chronicler evaded the charge somewhat lamely by explaining there was a truce by land but not by sea,⁵ there is no official record of a truce after Easter, 1405, and both sides were indulging in acts of hostility. In any case, Henry was not the man to let such a chance slip, and Parliament begged the King not to surrender "lightly the Scottish

¹ *Eulogii Contin.*, 411.

² Cal. of Patent Rolls (1405-1408), 471; Foedera, viii. 545.

³ Wyntoun, iii. 93. ⁴ *Ibid.*, 96. ⁵ *Annales Henrici iv.*, 418.

prisoners whom thanks to God he had in h's hands ".¹ On the very day that his son was captured at sea Robert III breathed his last,² and the regency of Scotland devolved on his brother Albany, who was quite well pleased that the boy king should be absent from the country. Thus Henry was able to keep the Scottish regent in restraint by threatening to release his rightful lord, maintaining thereby a state of fitful peace between the two countries till the end of his reign. On the side of France, Henry was, after long delays, equally successful. The rivalry between the Dukes of Burgundy and Orleans had brought that country to the edge of civil war, and in 1407 the King found the French Government growing amenable, so that for the first time since the beginning of the reign French envoys were received in England. Matters had come to a crisis in France, Orleans having fallen under his rival Burgundy's dagger, and this may have helped on the negotiations. On December 7th a short truce till the following April was signed,³ and the truces with France, Flanders, and Brittany were renewed in the following year, and again in 1409, when for the first time Catherine, the daughter of Charles VI., was mentioned as a possible wife for the future Henry V. Henry's time was coming. Before long the tables were to be entirely turned, and parties in France would be appealing for English help, not English rebels seeking supporters among the French King's subjects.

Thus foreign complications and internal rebellion ceased to threaten in any serious form from 1406 onwards, but the rest of the reign was by no means free from grave problems of government. Parliament became more loquacious, and continued its policy of active interference with the executive, while at Court dangerous divisions showed themselves among the advisers of the King. In the Parliament of 1406 the Speaker explained that the chief demand of the Commons was "good and abundant governance". The business of this session, as outlined by the Chancellor, was the protection of the King's subjects in Wales, France, Ireland, and on

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 580.

² April 4th, Wyntoun, iii. 98, Scotichronicon, ii. 439-440. In 1406 Palm Sunday fell on April 4th, not on March 30th as in Wylie, *Henry IV*, ii. 387.

³ Foedera, viii. 499, 504-509, Ordinances, i. 302-304, Monstrelet, i. 154-164, St. Denys, iii. 730-744. Orleans was murdered on November 23rd, and the safe-conduct for the French ambassadors was dated September 27th, so negotiations had begun before this event.

the Scottish march, which gave the Commons their opportunity to draw up a scheme of defence. The Prince of Wales was to be in command in Wales, but the defence of the seas was to be entrusted to certain merchants, to whom were allotted certain taxes for the maintenance of a fleet bearing two thousand men, exclusive of sailors, in summer and half that number in winter.¹ Such a plan is typical of the parliamentary ideas of the period. Profound distrust of the executive induced the Commons to hand over the functions of government to private persons, but characteristically without providing a sufficiency of money for the work. At the end of six months' trial the scheme was found unworkable, and was cancelled with the consent of Parliament,² for though it was obviously suggested by the success which had attended Philpot's private intervention in the early days of Richard II's reign, the Government now, with all its faults, was more efficient than any unofficial body could be. The King as usual was in terrible straits for money—he had even to borrow large sums from the Londoners to marry his daughter Philippa.³ The Commons had their own theories to account for the deficit, declaring that the King was being cheated by his customs officers and other financial officials, and insisting on a stringent inquiry into the matter.⁴ They demanded the expulsion of the foreigners about the Court, though later as a great concession they allowed them to stay on the payment of fines, and requested that they should be allowed to appoint auditors of the accounts in addition to those nominated by the King. Here for once Henry showed fight, but he was compelled to surrender the point, in return for a small grant of money to cover current expenses.

Heresy was the only other subject of first-rate importance which occupied the attention of this Parliament. Lords and Commons were agreed that the Lollards were a great danger to the body politic, both in their attacks on private property and in their continued insistence that Richard II. was still alive, therefore they

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 567, 568-571.

² *Ibid.*, 602-603, 610, Foedera, viii. 449, 455.

³ Cal. of Letter Book I., 48

⁴ *Ibid.*, 48; Rot. Parl., iii. 576. There is evidence that in 1409 certain moneys paid to the royal officials never reached the Exchequer (Cal. of Letter Book I., 82-83).

asked that the laws dealing with heretics should be strengthened by compelling civil magistrates to take cognisance of heterodoxy without a special commission. Though accepted by the King, the petition was never issued as a statute, and so far as we know never acted upon, thanks perhaps to Archbishop Arundel's opposition to the transference of clerical power to the state. More likely it became a dead letter owing to the growing rivalry among the King's entourage, for the petition marks the first appearance of the Prince of Wales in politics. It was directly under his patronage that it was put forward,¹ indeed it runs on the lines which he adopted towards this type of legislation when he ascended the throne, and he apparently had entered politics as the avowed opponent of Arundel, and the supporter of the growing rival faction of the Beauforts. It is here that we mark the first traces of those divisions among the supporters of the house of Lancaster which were ultimately to bring about its downfall. Arundel was a prominent member of the "Continual Council," and in January, 1407, he returned to the Chancery, an office he had not occupied since the first few days of the reign.² He represented the old order of things—the constitutional party which believed in curbing royal power in the interests of a baronial oligarchy. On the other hand, the Beaufort brothers were more definitely representative of the House of Lancaster itself, and perhaps in a way a better edition of the Court party of past days. Ever since Henry's accession they had all been prominent in the affairs of the kingdom. The eldest, John Earl of Somerset, had been Chamberlain of England since 1399,³ and Captain of Calais, and with his youngest brother Thomas had taken an active part in the Welsh War. Thomas had also served as Admiral of the Fleet in Northern parts, and had had a share in subduing the rebels of 1405, but the brains of the family were to be found in Henry, who was Chancellor from February, 1403, till he was promoted to the See of Winchester on the death of William of Wykeham in 1404. He now figured as a member of the "Continual Council," having also started his career of banker to the Crown by a loan of £600.⁴ It soon became apparent that he and Arundel were struggling for the control of the Government, and that Beaufort had secured the support of the Prince of Wales, who had

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 583.

² Cal. of Patent Rolls (1399-1401), 179.

³ Foedera, viii. 464.

⁴ Foedera, viii. 448.

been—so legend says—under his uncle's guardianship while a student at Queen's College, Oxford. The Prince was a brilliant young man of twenty. He was about the average height, slender, and long in the face, with a prominent nose and flat forehead crowned by thick brown hair. He was athletic, a swift runner and mighty jumper, but not very fond of the lists or of hunting and hawking; not very ready of tongue, he was wise in judgment and resourceful, a reader as well as a man of action.¹ His animal spirits found vent in other less commendable directions. Though he did not take part with his brothers Thomas and John in the affray in Eastcheap when they came to blows with the Londoners, he seems to have enjoyed the gay suppers at the house of Lewes John in the Vintry where the King's sons were entertained,² and he was credited with the devotion of his energies to the cult of Venus when not in the service of Mais.³ All chroniclers are agreed that the sobriety of his conduct as King was in marked contrast to his behaviour as Prince. On these guarded statements a whole mass of legend has been built up, his patronage of Hoccleve has led to vain imaginings of participation in the carousals of that poet in the taverns of Westminster Gate and Paul's Head,⁴ and above all to the story of how he was arrested at Coventry by Chief Justice Gascoigne for contempt of court, a legend which cannot be traced back further than 1531.⁵

The fight of parties round the throne was perhaps enhanced by the growing infirmity of the King, who had been unable to attend part of the Parliament of 1407, owing to a sudden illness, which first attacked his legs and then spread to the upper part of his body. The transference of the seals to Arundel, and the failure of the Prince's heresy petition point to a defeat of the Beaufort party, and this suspicion is enhanced by the fact that in February, 1407, the act which legitimised the Beauforts was reissued with the important, though quite unconstitutional, qualification that succes-

¹ *Memorials of Henry V*, 64-66; *Livius*, 4-5.

² Stow, *Survey of London* (ed. Kingsford), i. 241.

³ Elmham, *Vita*, 12.

⁴ Hoccleve, *Works* (E.E.T.S.), i. 29-31.

⁵ Sir Thomas Elyot's *Boke called the Goverour*, first published in 1531 (ed. by Croft, London, 1880), ii. 61-72, Redmayne in *Memorials of Hen V*, ii. Cf Hall, 46. See also *Athenaeum*, July and October, 1910, *Royal Hist. Trans.*, New Series, iii. 47-152; Mr. Kingsford's Introduction to *Translator of Livius*, pp. xxix-xxxii, xxxviii-xli.

sion to the Crown was not included¹ The rivalry between the two parties can be traced, though faintly, in the Parliament which met in October, 1407, in which Thomas Chaucer, probably a cousin of the Beauforts,² was elected Speaker. At the outset Chaucer, in addition to the timeworn complaint of purveyance, hinted that the "good and abundant governance" promised in the last Parliament had not been realized, though his words do not seem to justify the Chancellor's heated retort that the lords of the Council had been very zealous in executing their duties, had even supplied money for the necessities of Government, and yet were rewarded, not with thanks, as they might have expected, but with blame. The Commons returned to the charge on being asked to agree to a grant of money, which they were informed the Lords had decided was necessary for the Government. They declared this to be an infringement of their privileges, and the King yielded, only stipulating that nothing should be brought to his notice, as expressing the wishes of Parliament, without the consent of both houses.³ In thus asserting their right to initiate money bills the Commons were basing their action on the fact that Peers did not pay fifteenths or tenths on their demesne lands,⁴ but were called upon when necessary to pay a special tax, as in 1404,⁵ or were included in a different form of assessment, as in 1411,⁶ their consent to the usual subsidy being apparently only necessary in so far as they were supposed to represent their tenants. The Commons, having asserted their point, granted a subsidy and a half, together with customs duties for two years, on condition that no more taxes were called for till March, 1410.

On the question of suppressing Lollardy it is obvious that the two political parties advocated different methods of procedure. Arundel wished to work through the ecclesiastical courts, and early in 1409 took advantage of a synod, held at St. Paul's, for the election of representatives for the forthcoming Council of Pisa, to republish certain constitutions originally promulgated at Oxford in 1407. They were directed, as the chronicler states, against the

¹ *Ecclesia Historica*, 152-154.

² Geoffrey Chaucer's wife and Katherine Swinford, the mother of the Beauforts, being apparently sisters.

³ Rot. Parl., iii. 609, 611.

⁴ See Subsidy Roll in Nottingham Records, ii. 286.

⁵ Rot. Parl., iii. 546.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 648.

Lollards and vicious friars, and provided that no one should preach without licence, that schoolmasters should be careful in the expounding of Scripture to their pupils, that the works of Wycliffe should not be used in the Oxford schools till they had been authoritatively sanctioned, and that translations of Scripture were not to be made or read without the permission of the Ordinary.¹ The vernacular Bible had been Wycliffe's great gift to posterity, but he was by no means alone in translating the Scriptures,² nor even himself perhaps the author of the "Wycliffe Bible," though the dissemination of the Bible in the vulgar tongue did, it is true, lie very near his heart.³ There is no reason to believe that the mediaeval Church forbade all use of the Scriptures in English. Arundel only postulated that the translation should be authorized, and copies were to be found fairly frequently in the hands of the orthodox, such as Thomas of Gloucester, persecutor of Lollards,⁴ Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, patron of monks and scholars, and, amongst those of less exalted degree, the Bristolian, John Bount, benefactor of friars.⁵

Many did not sympathize with Arundel's bitterness of spirit, which called for the exhumation of Wycliffe's body, so that it might be burnt or cast upon a dunghill. The University of Oxford in particular objected to the censorship which he tried to enforce on the schools, and though not wholly vanquished here, he was obliged to yield to political pressure, and to resign the Seal to Sir Thomas Beaufort, the first lay chancellor of the reign and a representative of the opposition party. Further, when Parliament met in January, 1410, a new council was appointed for "good and substantial government," with the Prince at its head and

¹ Wilkins, *Concilia*, III 314-319, *Chron. Hen. IV*, 58-60.

² An independent translation of a large part of the New Testament exists in *A Fourteenth Century English Biblical Version*, ed. Anna C. Paues (Cambridge, 1902), and Richard Rolle of Hampole translated the Psalms. Sir Thomas More (*Works* (London, 1557), 233) declared that there were several versions before Wycliffe's.

³ Wycliffe, *English Works*, 429-430.

⁴ Inventory printed in *Vox Clamantis*, p. xlvi.

⁵ *Abstracts of Bristol Wills* (Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 1886), 73-74. For the question of Wycliffe and the Bible and the dissemination of the Scriptures, see Gasquet, *Old English Bible*, 102-178, *The English Bible*, ed., by J. Forshall and Sir F. Madden (Oxford, 1850), Vol. I.; F. G. Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient MSS*; *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, x. 91-99.

without Arundel among its members. Believing that the opposition to Arundel manifested by the Prince's party was dictated by heretical leanings, the Lollards placed before Parliament an elaborate scheme of ecclesiastical disendowment. Proud bishops, abbots, and priors were to be deprived of their wealth, though only certain clerical institutions were to be touched, and the proceeds were to be devoted to endowing fifteen earls, 1500 knights, 6200 squires, and 100 almshouses. As a result it was estimated that the King would be assured of a yearly income of £20,000 in dues from the new holders of these ecclesiastical lands, and the almshouses would make better provision for the relief of the poor, especially of those workmen who were debarred by the Statute of Cambridge from travelling in search of work¹. The old spiritual idea of disendowment propounded by Wycliffe is left far behind in this scheme, which appears to have been dictated more by financial than by religious motives—indeed it is but the reduction to definite form of the suggestions of courtiers and politicians earlier in the reign. The proposed endowment of earls, knights, and squires was to reconstitute the feudal host, and thus avoid the unpopular Commissions of Array. The promise of a fixed revenue for the King was to relieve the burden of taxation of which the Commons had long been complaining, and was in a sense a reply to the King's request to be allowed to raise a tenth and a fifteenth every year when Parliament was not summoned. Though money was urgently needed, and the Government was compelled to raise large loans, the Commons not only refused this request for a fixed income, but also prolonged the customs for two years only, and spread the subsidy and a half which they voted over a period of three years². They obviously preferred the disendowment programme as a means of raising money, though the only trace of it on the records is a petition that non-resident benefice holders should yield half their revenues to the King³. So far as disendowment was concerned the Prince threw the weight of his influence against the proposals,⁴ and he was evidently equally opposed to the relaxation of the laws against heresy, proposed by the Commons but

¹ *Chronicles of London*, 65-68 (dated 1407) Cf. Fabyan, 575; Walsingham, ii. 282-283

² Walsingham, ii. 283; Rot. Parl., iii. 635; Ordinances, i. 335, 343-344; ii. 114

³ Rot. Parl., iii. 645.

⁴ Walsingham, ii. 283.

retracted by them almost immediately. He was present in person at the burning of the Evesham tailor, John Badby, who was arraigned for heresy at this very time, though he vainly strove to induce him to recant, and he evidently distrusted Arundel's use of the Courts Christian.

As the King's health rapidly declined, party politics grew more and more bitter. The Prince, in power, gave his support to the University of Oxford in a new quarrel with Arundel during the year 1411, and perhaps it was at this time that the long rivalry between the two men broke into open conflict; it was certainly about this time that the King's son Thomas quarrelled with Bishop Beaufort, who was supported by the Prince of Wales.¹ Though the royal brothers were eventually reconciled, it is obvious that Thomas was tending to ally with the opponents of the Beauforts, and to adopt a foreign, if not a domestic, policy contrary to theirs. Matters of foreign policy indeed were coming to the front. Englishmen were already crossing the Channel to join in the faction fights of Armagnac and Burgundian, and the horrors which had visited France in the days of the free companies were reappearing, much to the delight of the English.² Burgundy sought help of the English Government, which was quite ready to treat on the basis of a marriage alliance between the Prince of Wales and Burgundy's daughter Catherine, indeed Henry himself prepared to take the field in person, for the protection, as he said, of the marches of Calais. But he did not sail, and it was becoming more and more evident that he did not see eye to eye with his eldest son. The Prince, apparently on his own authority, despatched troops to Burgundy's assistance, and there were even rumours that young Henry was going to usurp his father's place. The chroniclers are vague as to the details of the intrigue, and still more as to the exact date of its occurrence, but about this time Bishop Beaufort, in the name of a large body of lords, suggested to the King that he should make way for his son, but met with a curt refusal.³ The suggestion roused Henry from the lethargy engendered by his illness, and when Parliament met on November 3rd, 1411, he declared that

¹ *Chron. Hen. iv.*, 62; *Gesta*, 281-282.

² *St. Denys*, iv. 344, 364, 400, 410; *Hoccleve, Works*, iii. 191.

³ *Chron. Hen. iv.*, 62-63; *Gesta*, 282. Cf. *Eulogia Contin.*, 420-421, *English Chron.*, 37.

he was going to have no innovations, but intended to enjoy the liberties and prerogatives of his predecessors, and insisted on cancelling an article passed in the last Parliament which was offensive to him. It was freely said that he had good cause of complaint against certain members both of this and the previous Parliament, and the estates thought it wise to secure a royal declaration of their loyalty.¹ Henry, probably under the influence of Arundel, had declared war on a parliamentary majority led by Thomas Chaucer, Speaker once more, and under the influence of the Prince and the Beauforts. He dismissed his eldest son from the Council and set his brother Thomas in his stead, and at the close of the Parliament a change of ministry marked the transference of political power from the Beaufort faction and the return of Arundel. Henry was determined that no one, even his heir, should usurp his place, and despite his failing health he insisted on taking a more active personal share in the Government. The Commons, quick to read the signs of the times, hastened to vote generous supplies, which included a renewal of customs duties and a land tax of 6s 8d. on every £20 of income drawn from land.²

The change in the balance of parties reacted on foreign policy. The expedition sent by the Prince in 1411 had assisted Burgundy to capture St Cloud, but had returned before the end of the year. Hard on their retreating footsteps followed envoys of the faction, once called Orleanists, but now Armagnacs from their present leader, begging for support in return for a promised restitution of Aquitaine, a bait which induced the English Government to place soldiers at the disposal of Burgundy's foes. Though the Prince was obliged to ratify the treaty thus signed,³ he protested at his exclusion from power by appearing in London attended by many lords on June 30th, and announced that he had been slandered by sycophants who had sown discord between himself and his father. The latter, having received him in audience, told him that such matters must be reserved for the next meeting of Parliament.⁴ Still young Henry did his utmost to prevent the departure of the proposed expedition, and failing, again appeared in London on September 23rd, with

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 648-658.

² *Ibid* 648-649, Cal. of Letter Book I, 99, 103. ³ Foedera, viii. 743

⁴ Otterbourne, 270-271; *London Chron.*, 94. The Prince had been accused of appropriating public moneys (*Ordinances*, ii. 34-35).

another large and turbulent following. Perhaps it was to this time that men referred when, long afterwards, Bishop Beaufort was accused of having hired a man to conceal himself in the Prince's chamber and murder him as he lay in bed. The story was supported by a wealth of circumstantial detail, and was never adequately answered by the Bishop, but its truth can hardly be accepted without hesitation.¹ It points, however, to a state of great political unrest, and to the possibility of all kinds of unrevealed intrigue at Court during the last days of the reign²

Henry IV.'s plough was nearing its last furrow, as contemporaries would have said. He could no longer sit a horse, but with a sick man's fancy he began to dream of sailing forth on a Crusade, and his last few days were spent in restless wanderings round the neighbourhood of London. At length, at Christmastide, 1412, he was seized with a fainting fit and was thought to be dead, but recovered, to return to Westminster to meet the Parliament which he had summoned thither. Even with the hand of death heavy upon him, it is said that Henry was worried by the ambitions of his son, who still strove to snatch the Crown, but between seven and eight o'clock in the morning of March 20th he died, "immediately after whose death Henry V., his first-born son, began to reign".³

¹ Rot. Parl., iv. 298, *Chronicles of London*, 78, 83-84, 91-92.

² For a discussion of this obscure quarrel between Henry IV. and his son, see Mr Kingsford's Introduction to *Translator of Livius*, pp. xx-xxvii.

³ Cal. of Letter Book I., 113.

CHAPTER XIX

HENRY V. AND THE FRENCH WAR

(1418-1421)

"THE unquiet time of Henry IV," as Hall later called it, was over. No love was felt for the King, who had died miserably of a disease which was interpreted as the outward sign of God's anger, and whose rule had not been a success in the eyes of many. As Parliament told his successor, the Commons had petitioned again and again for "good governance," by which they meant the protection of subjects from both internal and external enemies, but though their prayer had been granted in words, the new King himself knew only too well how far these promises had been fulfilled in deeds¹ Such remarks were symbolical of the way men looked upon Henry V. as the leader of the opposition to his father. Some might fear that unfilial behaviour and a record of youthful wildness might not fit a man for the responsibilities of kingship.² But as a matter of fact, young Henry's opposition had been less a danger than a safety-valve to his father's throne. He had been a rallying-point for political opposition, which preferred constitutional methods to acts of overt rebellion, for the days of party politics had begun in an incipient form. As Henry IV breathed his last the "outs" knew that they had become the "ins." At the Chancery Bishop Beaufort at once took the place of his rival Archbishop Arundel, at the Treasury Sir John Pelham made way for the Earl of Arundel who had acted with Prince Henry in the past. The Duke of Clarence was removed from the command in Aquitaine, and his deputy in Ireland was replaced by another, though the King's other brother John, who had taken no hand in politics, was continued in his office on the Scottish March. This change of ministers was of course largely meant as an ostentatious reversal of Henry IV's

¹ Rot. Parl., iv. 4.

² Political Songs (Rolls Series), II. 118-119.

policy, as was also the conciliatory attitude adopted by the new King to his father's enemies. One of his first actions was to have the body of Richard II translated from Langley and laid with due solemnity in Westminster Abbey. John Mowbray, the brother and heir of Nottingham, was summoned to Parliament as Earl Marshal, and the prohibition against making offerings at Scrope's tomb was removed.¹ Later in the reign, too, steps were taken to restore the son of Hotspur to the Earldom of Northumberland, and John Holland to the Earldom of Huntingdon, forfeited by his father in the rising of 1400. Henry was anxious to proclaim to all and sundry that the bad old days were past, an intention made more abundantly manifest when he released the Earl of March and restored him to his estates.² Parliamentary proceedings indeed were very tame after the excitements of the last reign, and the only legislation of importance was the provision that only residents should be qualified to vote in county elections,³ an attempt to exclude the "plural voter" which may point to undue pressure from outside the constituencies.

Still there were signs that the political situation had not entirely taken a turn for the better. Private war, too, was not unknown,⁴ and the question of heresy had to be faced. The Lollards, uncrushed by recent legislation, were now particularly strong in the ranks of the middle class. They still had many adherents in London, so much so that Arundel thought that fines would be a more effective punishment than excommunication for recalcitrant barbers,⁵ and a strictly orthodox mayor, in fear probably of Lollard irritation, thought it wise to instruct the special preacher at Easter, 1415, to be moderate in his language.⁶ Their leader was a well-known knight, Sir John Oldcastle, who in right of his wife had assumed the title of Lord Cobham, and had been summoned to Parliament under the title "J Oldcastle, chivalier". He was not of lowly origin as his enemies averred,⁷ but of good country gentleman stock, though his wife was connected with the merchant class. He had served with distinction in the Welsh wars, and had taken part in the expedition of 1411 to France. He had been a firm friend of the King as Prince of Wales, though in 1410 he

¹ Hardyng, 372

² Lords Report, v. 170-171.

³ Statutes, ii 170

⁴ Brut, 595.

⁵ Cal of Letter Book I., 115-116

⁶ Ibid., 132.

⁷ Usk, 121.

was not only in correspondence with Bohemian heretics¹ but had sheltered a chaplain who mixed "tares and heresies" with his teaching.² In March, 1413, he was found to be connected with a priest suspected of heterodoxy, and after Henry V's accession he was proved in Convocation to have been the possessor of a book condemned for heretical teaching. The matter was brought before the King, who was informed that there was evidence to prove that Oldcastle was a great protector of Lollards, and that the Church would have no peace till certain great men who favoured these heretics were brought to order by the arm of the secular law. Henry though shocked at the evidence laid before him, asked the forbearance of Convocation till he had tried to argue his fiend into a penitent frame of mind, but Oldcastle absconded from Court, betaking himself to his Castle of Cooling, where he refused to accept service of a writ citing him to appear before the Archbishop. Excommunication and another citation were issued against the recalcitrant knight, whose persecution stirred up the Lollards to boast of a hundred thousand men ready to rise in arms to support their cause, and to call frequent meetings for the organization of sedition.³ On September 23rd Oldcastle was brought a prisoner before Arundel, having been arrested recently at Windsor. He put in a confession of faith, which was quite orthodox but vague, and when pressed on the two cardinal points of Transubstantiation and Confession, he refused to accept the definition of orthodoxy put forward by the Court. On the question of the clergy he waxed wroth, declaring that the Pope was the head of Anti-Christ, the archbishops, bishops, and other prelates were his members, and the friars his tail, and that only those priests who followed Christ were to be obeyed. Here probably Oldcastle touched the true cause of the movement in which he participated. In the reign of Henry IV, a Lollard in one of the rhymed pamphlets of the time had offered his opponents £100, in the most approved modern fashion, if they could prove that immorality reigned in his sect as it did among the friars,⁴ and heresy probably was more a protest against the

¹ Letters from Oldcastle in *Mittheilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* (Innsbruck, 1891), xii. 266-269.

² Wilkins, *Concilia*, iii. 329-331 ³ Walsingham, ii. 291; Foedera, ix. 46.

⁴ Political Songs (Rolls Series), ii. 49. Between 1401 and 1439 seventy persons were indicted for immorality in London, and of these forty-four were priests (Cal of Letter Book I., 273-287).

priesthood and its pretensions than a matter of fundamental doctrinal difference. So far as Oldcastle was concerned, there could be no doubt as to the verdict, though Arundel made one more effort to induce him to recant, and sentence of excommunication was passed, the prisoner being handed over to the secular arm. Even then the King, hoping for a submission, granted a forty days' respite to the prisoner, who used it to escape from the Tower on October 19th with the assistance of certain London citizens.

A crisis was obviously at hand. On October the 20th all loyal subjects were forbidden to harbour the escaped prisoner,¹ on December 4th certain arrests were privately ordered,² in Smithfield constables watched so as to seize Oldcastle if he left his lair, and spies were employed to discover Lollard plans.³ It was found that a conspiracy was on foot to slay or seize the King at Eltham, and to organize a muster, probably simultaneously, outside London in St. Giles' parish. Oldcastle, who had been lying concealed in London, emerged to lead the movement; it was currently reported that he intended to slay the King and his brothers, declare himself Regent, and divide the land into small principalities,⁴ but on the very day that his plans were to mature a band of his followers was seized at the sign of the Axe outside Bishopsgate. This was on January 6th. Two days later the King came up from Eltham where he had been spending Christmas, and from Westminster directed operations. The meeting at St. Giles had been postponed till January 10th,⁵ but as the Lollard rebels came hurrying over the fields to the rendezvous they were intercepted by royalist troops, while the discontented in the city were kept within the walls. Some were arrested, many fled, including the arch-conspirator himself. Commissions of inquiry were issued,⁶ heavy rewards were offered for the apprehension of Oldcastle, but no vengeance was to be taken save according to law and custom of the realm.⁷ Many executions followed, far more than under similar circumstances during Henry IV.'s reign, but on March 28th an offer of a free pardon brought vengeance to a close. It is perfectly obvious that this was no purely Lollard movement. Instigated originally though it was by the

¹ Cal. of Letter Book I., 119-120. ² Cal. of Patent Rolls (1413-1416), 149

³ Devon Issues, 330, 333 ⁴ Foedera, ix. 170-171. ⁵ Rot. Parl., iv. 108.

⁶ Cal. of Patent Rolls (1413-1416), 175, 177, Cal. of Letter Book I., 123.

⁷ Cal. of Letter Book I., 122.

religious malcontents, the conspirators' plans went far beyond this, and in Parliament the Chancellor allowed that others who were not Lollards had taken part in the rising.¹ Lollardy had become finally and entirely identified with a political party.

The transactions in the Parliament which met in April at Leicester betrayed the disturbed state of the country. The Chancellor alluded not only to the recent outbreak, but also to the riots, homicides, and misdemeanours prevalent in many parts of the kingdom.² But that which was hoped would strike at the root of the evil was a statute, which declared in the preamble that Lollard doctrines were subversive not only of the Christian faith, but also of all estates both spiritual and temporal, and of the law of the land. It directed that all officers of justice from the highest to the lowest were to search out holders of erroneous opinions and hand them over to the ordinaries for trial.³ It was in accordance with Henry's past policy to make heresy a secular crime, and it points to a growing belief that Lollardy was a menace to the body politic as well as to the established religion. The reformers were ready as a contemporary rhymester believed

under colour of sucche lollynge,
To shape sodeyn surreccoun
Against oure liege lord Kinge.⁴

They had undoubtedly been driven into it by repressive legislation, and by the readiness of political malcontents to make use of a movement which could muster a respectable, if not an overwhelming, number of adherents

But Henry was impatient of the petty details of party politics. Young, full of ambition, and conscious of military capacity, he must have chafed at the restrictions which bound a Lancastrian King, restrictions brought to his notice when the Commons in the Leicester Parliament insisted that the royal answers to their petitions should be limited to a plain yea or nay, and that no statute should be issued without their consent to every word and sentence contained therein.⁵ It was therefore natural that he should begin to dream of foreign conquest in France, where Burgundian and Armagnac

¹ Rot. Parl., iv. 15. Several of the conspirators were hung and not burnt, which indicates that they did not suffer for heresy.

² *Ibid*

⁴ Political Songs (Rolls Series), ii. 247.

³ Statutes, ii. 181-184.

⁵ Rot. Parl., iv. 32.

were still at each others' throats. At Henry's accession Burgundy was in the ascendancy, and with him negotiations were opened for a renewal of the truce. Before the end of the year the Armagnacs were in control of the French Government, and the Duke of York appeared in Paris, hoping to induce the new French Government to send envoys to England. Accordingly the Archbishop of Bourges and other envoys came to England, but Henry made demands such as the French ambassadors could not discuss, and English envoys again crossed the Channel, ostensibly to seek an agreement, whereby the "spilling of Christian blood" might be avoided on the basis of a marriage between their King and Charles's daughter Catherine. Other negotiations were on foot, both French parties being anxious for an English alliance, and Burgundian envoys were treating with Henry at the very time that the Archbishop of Bourges was in England.¹

The great problem before the King's councillors was from which party most generous terms could be secured. The King himself with the Beauforts and his brother John, recently raised to the Dukedom of Bedford, looked to Burgundy as the most likely ally, while Clarence, supported by the Duke of York and Humphrey, the youngest of the royal brothers, now Duke of Gloucester, favoured an Armagnac alliance,² a renewal of the party divisions of Henry IV.'s reign. Most seemed likely to be gained from the Burgundians, as the party in opposition, and when envoys from both factions appeared at Leicester in 1414, it was Burgundy's representatives who received the warmest welcome, and who in return agreed to sign an offensive and defensive alliance with Henry. This treaty was kept secret, and so did not prevent the continuation of negotiations, during which Henry offered to marry either Catherine of Burgundy or Catherine of France. But his intention to pick a quarrel with France became more and more obvious. He began to make references to the Treaty of Bretigny, and to remind his adversaries that King John's ransom had not been paid, nay more, he claimed a share of French territory larger than even Edward III had possessed. Few can have doubted that the French war would be renewed.³ The Commons in the Leicester Parliament had alluded to it casually as an accepted fact.⁴ Munitions of war were being

¹ *Foedera*, ix. 189.

² *Ursins*, 500.

³ *Foedera*, ix. 149-150, 208-213.

⁴ *Rot. Parl.*, iv. 22.

collected steadily, if not ostentatiously, and every effort was made to secure Burgundian fidelity. In September, 1414, a great council was called to discuss the situation, and in November Parliament was informed that the King was going to assert his right to the inheritance of his forefathers in foreign parts, and trusted to the loyalty of his subjects to provide the means.¹ Acting under the advice of his lieges, though probably inclined thereto by the necessity of perfecting his preparations, Henry still continued to negotiate. English ambassadors visited France and made exorbitant claims of territory, to which the French offered counter proposals of considerable generosity. Even down to the very eve of war the negotiations continued, and in July, 1415, the Archbishop of Bourges met Henry at Winchester. The slightly more conciliatory attitude shown by the English did not deceive the French envoys, and the embassy proved as fruitless as its predecessors. So far it was not clear that Henry intended to renew Edward's III.'s claim to the French throne, but that he was bent on war was obvious from the enormous preparations made, and from the appointment of the Duke of Bedford as regent "in the King's absence". In view of all this it was useless for Henry to tell the French King that as God was his witness he had done all that he could to secure peace.² It is customary for men in general, and Englishmen in particular, to believe that the Almighty looks with peculiar favour on their undertakings, and Henry may perhaps be excused in believing in the righteousness of his cause, but to maintain that he had striven for peace was a piece of hypocrisy which cannot have deceived even himself. When he told the Londoners that the expedition would redound to the advantage of the whole realm,³ he was more honest, if equally inaccurate, in his statement.

Preparations for war on an enormous scale went on. Men were raised by indentures, provisions were ordered, ships collected, and sailors impressed. Masons and carpenters, turners and smiths were engaged. Carts, tools, iron, and horse-shoes were collected. Money was borrowed on all sides. London and other towns in their corporate capacities, wealthy merchants, bishops, all contributed, even the Italian traders were compelled to help under a threat of imprisonment, and the Crown jewels and plate had to be given as security.

¹ Rot. Parl., iv. 34

² Letter in St. Denys, v. 526 530.

³ *Memorials of London*, 604.

for the payment of wages or the repayment of loans. At the same time every precaution was taken to protect the realm in the King's absence. Offers of pardon were made to Owen Glendower, and even to Oldcastle, outlaw and heretic though he was, on condition of surrendering himself. The danger from Scotland was the most pressing. Quite at the beginning of the reign Henry had opened negotiations for peace and for the ransom of the King of the Scots, but nothing more had been done in the matter, though the Duke of Albany had secured the promised liberation of his son Murdoch from an English prison. Murdoch broke faith and tried to escape, but was recaptured, which led his father to receive French ambassadors,¹ and when Henry sailed for France it seemed more than likely that an inroad from the North was imminent² Moreover, this was not the only danger which threatened the peace of the kingdom, for Albany was in communication with traitors around Henry's person. In July, 1415, when the King was already at Southampton, the Earl of March waited on him with a story such as Henry IV. had heard only too often. A conspiracy, headed by the newly created Earl of Cambridge, brother of the Duke of York, Henry Lord Scrope of Masham, and Sir Thomas Grey of Heaton, was on foot to place the pseudo-Richard on the throne, or failing him the Earl of March himself. The main hope of the conspirators was in Wales and the North; Young Percy, the son of Hotspur, was to be brought down from Scotland, along with the false Richard, but the conspirators were not decided as to whether they should act before or after the King had sailed. The Earl of March had known about it for some time, so the conspirators averred, and his confidential servant Lucy had been an active go-between for the parties concerned.³ A commission of inquiry was at once instituted, and on August 2nd a jury was empanelled to try the prisoners. Cambridge and Grey confessed their guilt, but Scrope denied any traitorous intent, a denial which was supported to some extent by the evidence of Cambridge,⁴ but given the lie direct by Grey, who declared that it was Scrope

¹ Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, iv. 238.

² Foedera, iv. 299, 307, 310; Cal. of Letter Book I., 163.

³ Letters of the three conspirators to Henry after arrest, much mutilated but still legible in places, printed in Dep. Keeper's Rep. xlvi., Appendix 1, pp. 582-594, Confession of Cambridge in Foedera, ix. 300-301, and a more correct version in Nicolas, Agincourt, Appendix iv., Gesta, 10-11.

⁴ Foedera, ix. 300-301; Ellis, *Letters* (second series), i. 45-47.

who had approached the Earl of March.¹ Grey was put to death at once, but the others were allowed the form of a trial by their Peers before their execution outside the North Gate of Southampton. The procedure was wholly irregular, so much so that it was deemed necessary to legalize it in the next Parliament, but the urgency of the case was sufficient excuse.

There were other signs of disaffection in the country. Oldcastle had come out of hiding and was naturally supposed to be in sympathy, if not in alliance, with the Southampton conspirators,² but Lord Abergavenny, who led a force against him, drove him once more into hiding. The worst days of crisis which had characterised the previous reign seemed likely to be repeated. Scotland was threatening on the North, Oldcastle was skulking in the West, where men believed that Welsh discontent was still smouldering; worst of all, men of mark in the kingdom were ready to conspire against the Government. The treachery of Cambridge was of course purely dynastic, his wife was sister to the Earl March, and his heiress if he died childless. Sir Thomas Grey represented the constant discontent of the northern magnates, but the treachery of Scrope was the gravest sign of all. The intimate friend and confidant of the King,³ he cannot have turned traitor unless he thought the times pointed to a change of dynasty. Some said that French gold had bought his treachery;⁴ he himself asserted that the conspirators approached him because they thought that he would wish to avenge his kinsman Archbishop Scrope.⁵ But a very confident belief in the weakness of Henry's position seems to have been the real cause of his treason.⁶

The state of affairs was so serious that the King was urged to postpone his departure: indeed all along there seem to have been many who doubted the wisdom of an aggressive foreign policy, despite Henry's specious argument that the more the King's dominions were extended the less would be the burdens on his English subjects.⁷ At the same time there were, undoubtedly, elements in the nation that longed for war. The coast towns,

¹ Dep. Keeper's Rep. xliii, App. i. 584.

² Scrope declared that he warned March "y schewid hym quat perilz wolde faule yif he due to Loolardis" (*ibid.*, 591).

³ Walsingham, ii. 305.

⁴ Usk, 125.

⁵ Dep. Keeper's Rep. *ut supra*, 590.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 584, 585.

⁷ Rot. Parl., iv. 334.

mindful of past French raids, were naturally anxious for retaliation. The ecclesiastics, too, were said to favour war,¹ though we cannot accept in detail the long speech attributed to Chichele, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, by sixteenth century historians, in which he urged a warlike policy as a means of diverting public opinion from the projects for despoiling the Church.² We probably find here traces of the main argument which influenced Henry to invade France, if we leave aside his own personal ambition. Knowing that sedition lurked in secret corners of men's hearts, he determined to "busy restless minds in foreign quarrels". He believed, with many other statesmen before and since, that a war would pull the nation together. Looking back to Crecy and Poictiers, he forgot to consider later days, the sad heritage of war, the political and economical discontent of a beaten people, and the quarrels of a baronial party debauched by foreign spoil. He looked to the momentary effect, and not to the ultimate result, of the policy he was adopting. He did not understand that a palliative is not a remedy. The Southampton conspiracy might have warned him to desist, instead it spurred him on. Sure of himself, encouraged by the divisions of France, he never doubted of victory, but the days were past when victory necessarily meant conquest. The spirit of nationality was rising in Europe, and before it the English attack on France was to fail, and that disastrously. When on August 11th Henry weighed anchor and led his fleet out of Southampton Water,³ he was about to establish a great reputation as a general, but he had already forfeited the title of statesman.

On the vigil of the Assumption, Henry effected a landing near the "chef de Caux" at the mouth of the Seine, within three miles of the important town of Harfleur, the approach to which was obstructed by dykes and earthworks, though these were unguarded, either from the lack of men, or from a belief that an English invasion was a matter of no serious import. He at once issued orders forbidding the molestation of non-combatants, clergy, and women, and the spoliation of churches, thus establishing a principle from which he did not depart throughout the war.⁴ From

¹ Cotton MS., Claudius A. viii. f. 11v.

² Redmayne in *Memorials of Henry V.*, 25-37; Hall, 49-52.

³ Gesta, 13.

⁴ See detailed regulations issued in 1419, Nicolas, *Agincourt*, App. viii.

the first he posed as the saviour of France come to relieve the peasantry from their woes, an assertion calculated to appeal to the overtaxed Frenchmen.¹ Henry by his express desire to spare non-combatants showed a wiser appreciation of his claims on France than ever had Edward III. His first action on French soil proclaimed that he meant to treat the men of Normandy as his subjects

On August 17th the army advanced in the usual three columns towards Harfleur, which possessed strong walls and a good situation at the junction of the Seine and its tributary the Lezarde. The harbour entrance was commanded by two towers on either side, between which a chain was drawn to prevent all ingress. The English approached the town from the west, and found that they were prevented from establishing a complete blockade by a large lake, formed by damming up the river, which thus covered all the northern approaches. It was therefore easy for the Sire de Gaucourt to throw himself into the town with reinforcements, and the operation would have been repeated, had not the Duke of Clarence been dispatched to march round the flood and establish himself on the eastern side. With troops to east and west, boats patrolling the floods to the north, and the English ships brought up to blockade the mouth of the harbour, Harfleur was entirely cut off from the outer world. Mines and counter-mines were driven, sally and counter attack produced a certain amount of hand-to-hand fighting, but the most interesting aspect of the siege was the extensive use of cannon. The King's youngest brother Humphrey was placed in command of the "gonnes," which were heavier and more powerful than any hitherto seen in an English army. The main burden of the attack fell upon them, and thanks to an arrangement whereby the gunners worked in relays, they were kept going the whole day through, special shelters being constructed round them in such a way as to be lowered for the purpose of taking aim, but raised again as soon as this was done. The King's guns were given names. "London," "Messagere," and "Kynge Doughter" all played havoc at Harfleur.—

Among the houses the balles ren,
And mad many a Frenche men lame.²

The besieged held out bravely against the onslaught of these heavy engines. The breaches in the walls were filled by faggots

¹Cf. Denys, v. 534-536.

²Poem in Nicolas, *Agincourt*, 309.

and tubs of earth, clay was spread in the streets to prevent the splintering of missiles that fell there,¹ but provisions were running short, and the fortifications were seriously damaged. Appeals to Paris failed to bring relief, to the everlasting shame of the French Government, as even its friends confessed, and on September 18th, rather than face a grand assault, the garrison agreed to surrender if not relieved in four days. On Sunday, September 27th, Henry entered Harfleur, his first conquest on French soil, and at once sent the joyful news to the citizens of London.²

It was evidently Henry's intention to make Harfleur a second Calais, since it was, as the French chronicler says, "the chief port of Normandy, and the best base the English could have for their military operations in that district".³ Having removed most of the women and the infirm, he gave many of the remaining townsfolk the option of taking the oath of allegiance or departing with such goods as they could carry,⁴ and at the same time encouraged English citizens to take the place of those expelled by promising houses, and ultimately, when they should have settled, a charter and corporate rights.⁵ Having secured Harfleur, Henry sent to the Dauphin a challenge to personal combat, offering, if he won, to allow Charles VI. to reign till his death, on condition that the crown then passed to the English King. This was Henry's first definite assertion of claim to the French throne, but in making it he forgot that if Edward III.'s claim to the French throne was lawful, the rightful King of France was the Earl of March. Henry was far gone in self-deception.

For a fortnight Henry rested at Harfleur. A council of war decided that, as the winter was approaching, the army should return to England, but contrary to the opinion of his wisest advisers the King insisted that this should be by way of Calais, thus entailing a march right across northern France. In vain it was urged that the enemy had mustered in force, while the English numbers were depleted.⁶ Indeed the English army was a shadow of its former self. The warm days of August and September, together with the

¹ *Gesta*, 23-24.

² Delpit, *Documents*, 217. For date cf. Cal. of Letter Book I., 131.

³ Waurin, ii. 184.

⁴ *Gesta*, 33; *Livius*, 10-11; *St. Denys*, v. 544; *Monstrelet*, iii. 94; *St. Remy*, i. 229; *Ursins*, 509.

⁵ Cal. of Letter Book I., 159, 161, *Elmham, Vita*, 448; *Brut*, 377.

⁶ *Gesta*, 36; *Livius*, 11-12.

stagnant water which lay around Harfleur and the scarcity of provisions, had caused fever and dysentery to rage in the camp, and among those who had died were the Bishop of Norwich and the Earl of Suffolk. Moreover, the Duke of Clarence, too ill for further campaigning, had to return to England with many lords and soldiers, and a considerable contingent had to be left with the Earl of Dorset to garrison the town. Of the 2000 men-at-arms and 6000 archers who had sailed from England, a force of less than 6000 was left to follow the King to Calais. On October 8th Henry set out upon his memorable journey. Apart from his prohibition of plundering, the march might have been one of the vain projects of Edward III. Though an admiring biographer declares that he made no haste,¹ it is plain that he hoped to reach Calais quickly, for he left all his waggons behind,² his cannon having already been dispatched by sea to meet him at his journey's end. Mindful of the great Crèçy march, he made straight for Abbeville, only meeting with trifling resistance as he passed Eu. As he neared his goal, he learned from a Gascon prisoner that the bridge over the Somme was broken down, and that the ford of Blanche-tâque was strongly guarded. The English were compelled to wheel round to the right, and march up the left bank of the Somme, seeking anxiously for a place to cross, since their supply of food was exhausted, and they were approaching a district devoid of provender, harried as it had been by the French cavalry.³ At last near Nesle a ford, approached by two narrow causeways, was found, and on the 19th the army crossed the river safely without interference, for the enemy were probably as little aware of the small numbers of their opponents as were the French chroniclers when later they came to record the story of the march. Despite a challenge from the Armagnac leaders, Henry pursued his way. At Peronne he fell in with the tracks of the French army, but on October 24th he reached Maisonetelles still unmolested, though now the enemy had appeared in sight. So near were they, that all through the wild night which preceded the day of Crispin and Crispinian their cries could be heard clearly in the English camp.

The English were early astir the next morning, and ready for the fight, thanks to the cheery optimism of their commander, a born

¹ Livius, 12.

² Elmham, *Vita*, 51.

³ Gesta, 39-40; Walsingham, ii. 310.

leader of men, who had constantly revived flagging spirits during the toilsome march.¹ Probably none knew better than he that the fate of his rash venture lay in the hands of the French leaders. With an army at least three times the size of the English, they could have starved out the invaders by a policy of inaction, since they were masters of the only road of escape. Nevertheless years of constant quarrelling and political intrigue had not improved the tempers of French noblemen, and though the Duke of Burgundy was not himself present in the host, and had forbidden his vassals to serve under anyone but himself, dissension was none the less rampant, and the nominal commander, the Constable d'Albret, had little real authority. The French, drawn up in battle array, awaited developments, which considering their position, hemmed in as they were in a narrow space between two woods, was unwise. Meanwhile, Henry had mustered his men in a single line, and had led them forward a little way. Here realising the magnitude of the task that lay before him, he offered to parley, asking for safe passage to Calais in return for the surrender of Harfleur and all his prisoners. The French, however, demanded the renunciation of all claims to the throne of France. To this Henry would not consent, but it was thus nearly ten o'clock before he at last gave the order, "Avaunt Banner," and led his cheering army to the attack. Within bow-shot range the English halted. The King commanded the centre, on the right was the Duke of York, on the left Lord Camoys. All were dismounted, and each body of men-at-arms had archers drawn up on either side in the now time-honoured formation. Opposite them lay the French in three divisions, one behind the other, the first of which at least was dismounted with a body of cavalry on either wing. Earlier in the campaign it had come to Henry's ears that the enemy intended to ride down his archers, and he had therefore bidden them cut themselves stakes, sharpened at both ends,² which they planted in front of them as a protection against a cavalry charge. Down came the French horse, but their mounts would not face the arrow flight, and such as reached the English lines only perished before the stakes. The true way to meet the fire of the English, which was now concentrated on the main body of the French, was to return it with interest: but French ideas of chivalry packed away base crossbow-

¹ *Gesta, 45, 46-47; Chronicles of London, 119-120.*

² *Gesta, 42; Brut, 378*

men behind the first line, and the few cannon that they possessed seem to have been also quite useless. Moreover, the undisciplined men-at-arms refused to await the order to advance, and soon the whole first line was rushing forward to the attack, and sinking knee-deep in the newly ploughed and rain-sodden fields. Such as survived the pitiless cross-fire of the English bowmen were exhausted by the time they reached the enemy. Only sheer weight of numbers propelled them as far as the English lines, and there their numbers were an impediment, as they had no room to use their weapons. The bows of the archers had now done their work, and they were discarded for the sword, axe, or mace. Agile and fleet of foot, most of the English bowmen had cast off their foot coverings. Unimpeded by defensive armour, they fell on the flanks of the perspiring Frenchmen. Bearing down all opposition, the whole English army drove the French before them right through the second line. Most of the third line fled without striking a blow. With desperate courage the Duke of Alençon rallied his men, and for a moment it seemed that he might retrieve the day. The Duke of Gloucester fell wounded, and only the presence of mind and courage of Henry saved his brother's life. Even after this a diversion was created by an attack on the baggage in the rear, and the French third line showed some signs of renewing the fight. But Henry's order to slay the prisoners, who were already numerous, averted this danger, though hundreds of Frenchmen had been butchered before the English realised that their alarms were groundless. Thousands of the French lay dead, including D'Albret, Alençon, and Burgundy's brother the Duke of Brabant, who despite that brother's commands had arrived during the battle and had fallen striving recklessly to retrieve the day. The English had to mourn less than a hundred dead, amongst them Edward, Duke of York—the Aumâle of the time of Richard II.—who atoned for a shifty life by a warrior's death, and the Earl of Suffolk, who had only succeeded to the title on the death of his father before Harfleur. There were many prisoners, most important of them the Duke of Orleans, who was destined to endure many years' captivity on foreign soil.¹ Once again English tactics had come forth triumphant. once again an English army on an aggressive campaign in

¹ Accounts of the battle by eye-witnesses are to be found in *Gesta*, 49-58; *St. Remy*, i. 247-259; *Waurin*, ii. 202-218.

foreign territory had been practically allowed to fight on the defensive, for the battle was won and lost by the disorderly charge of the French first line. Trained men, less sure of their own superiority, might have compelled the English to attack, and then the result of the battle might have been very different. As it was, French folly added yet another name to Crécy and Poictiers, increased the prestige of English arms, and proved that the English Bowman had still to find his match when skilfully combined with dismounted men-at-arms.

"A great victory : glory to God in the highest,"¹ such was the universal verdict throughout England. While the army on its march had been cut off from communication with friends at home, the greatest anxiety had been felt in London, but mourning was turned into joy when on October 29th the Mayor received the news of victory just as he was preparing to journey to Westminster to be sworn into office before the barons of the Exchequer. Bells rang out from every steeple in joyous peal, and the civic pageant was immediately transformed into a solemn pilgrimage to give thanks in the abbey church for the triumphant success of the English arms.² But the great celebrations were reserved for the day when their King returned to the capital. It was on Saturday, November 23rd, that Henry, having brought his army safely to Calais, and having thence crossed to Dover, made his state entry into London. All the resources of mediaeval art were drawn upon to do honour to the man who had restored the prestige of English arms. Early in the morning the Mayor and Aldermen in their scarlet robes, followed by a band of citizens in red suits, with the hoods thereof particoloured red and white according to the city livery, each bearing the badge of his trade, rode forth to meet him as he approached from Eltham Palace. The two parties met at Blackheath, where the King took the head of the joint procession, composed of his prisoners, a small retinue of his personal following, and lastly the citizens. "To London brigge thanne rood oure King" where

Upon the gate ther stode on hy
A gyaunt that was full grym of syght
To teche the Frensshmen courtesye.

¹ Salisbury Records, *Hist. MSS. Rep.* (Various Collections, vol. iv.), 197.

² *Memorials of London*, 620-622; *Lond. Chron.*, 101-102.

In his right hand was an axe, in his left the keys of the city, and beside him a figure representing his wife clad in scarlet. At the drawbridge a figure of St. George, "our Ladye Knyght," stood under a splendid pavilion, while grouped behind him in the houses boys, arrayed in white with glittering wings to represent the angelic host, sang an English anthem. On either side of the road columns, painted to represent marble and jasper, were surmounted by the supporters of the royal arms, and the houses along the whole route of the procession were hung with tapestries, on which the doughty deeds of the heroes of antiquity and the Kings of England were represented. The lattices and windows were crowded with sight-seers in holiday clothes, the streets were so thronged that the procession could scarcely pass through them, while the crowd signified its joy by blowing trumpets, clarions, and horns.

Full goodly there they gonnen hym grete
Thorough out the town thanne gonне they syng
For joy and merthe yow behete.

At every stage some pageant, cunningly conceived in the spirit of mediaeval allegory, greeted the King. The Eleanor Cross in the centre of Cheap was surrounded by a pageant castle with two arches thrown out on either side, and with a miniature drawbridge leading from the castle to the street level. Across this bridge danced maidens, singing, "Welcome Henry the Fifth Kinge of Englonnd and of Fraunce," while on the summit of the Tower the angelic host sang the Te Deum. To cries of "Nowell! Nowell!" the King and his retinue passed under the arches to the conduit at the west end of Cheap, which was covered with a sky-blue canopy on which clouds were painted, surmounted by the figure of an archangel supported by four angels. At the Cathedral church Henry was met by an ecclesiastical procession, which conducted him into the building, where he gave thanks. Thence he proceeded to Westminster, still wearing a quiet humble mien, giving thanks, it seemed, to God and not glorying in his own prowess.

The warmth and colour, the underlying joyousness of mediaeval English life shines through the description of this scene. It shows us too the splendour and wealth of a proud city, and reflects the expression of national sentiment with regard to the French war. Rejoicings over Agincourt were universal.

The Government was not slow to realise that this wonderful

victory was a splendid asset, and in the four successive Parliaments the Chancellor's speech was devoted more or less to a recapitulation of the events which led up to the battle.¹ This exploitation of martial and patriotic enthusiasm for political ends enabled the Government to make men forget their social and economic grievances. Though three Parliaments sat between November, 1415, and December, 1416, little or no social legislation resulted. There were mild complaints about purveyance and the commandeering of ships,² the Commons seemed worried at the debasement of the coinage and the mismanagement of the hospitals,³ the old spirit of hostility to labour was evinced by complaints received from Coventry, and the modification of the Statute of Cambridge, whereby employers were relieved of the fines imposed on them for paying wages higher than the statutory limit, so that they might be less unwilling to give evidence against workmen who received such wages.⁴ But pending the renewal of the war, all men were more interested in the political significance of the visit to England of Sigismund, King of the Romans.

Sigismund was already one of the most striking figures in European politics. After a youth spent in asserting his wife's right to the Hungarian throne, and in ruling Bohemia for his unwilling brother Wenzel, he had been chosen in 1411 King of the Romans, and even the drink-besotted Wenzel consented to the transference of power to his younger brother, though he still hugged the imperial title. Sigismund's splendid physique and handsome presence marked him out as a leader of men, but he had behind him a record of faithlessness, if not of meanness, which consortcd ill with his ambition to restore imperial power. He had managed to secure the meeting of an Ecumenical Council at Constance to solve the problems which had divided the Church ecclesiastically, though not dogmatically, since the beginning of the Papal schism in 1378. The Council of Pisa in 1409, to which English representatives had been sent, had only rendered matters more confounded by electing another Pope, which brought the number of those claiming the ecclesiastical allegiance of Western Christendom up to three. The conciliar Pope had been acknowledged in England, though not without murmurs from those who still championed the Roman Pope,

¹ Rot. Parl., iv. 62, 70, 94, 106.

² Ibid., 83, 80-81.

³ Ibid., 81, 79.

⁴ Ibid., 75, 103.

Gregory XII. English envoys had been sent to Constance, where they had assisted at the deposition of the conciliar Pope John XXIII. and had witnessed the abdication of Gregory XII.¹ Sigismund had since then journeyed to Perpignan in the vain hope of inducing Benedict XIII. to resign also, but all this was only a stepping-stone towards uniting Christendom against the Turk, who was already encamped on the eastern frontiers of Europe. To this end it was desirable to restore peace between England and France, and from Perpignan, Sigismund went to Paris, offering to mediate between the two countries. Here his only success was to induce the French to send with him to England an embassy, which was probably more intent on ransoming prisoners than on ending the war.

Sigismund had been for some time in close relationship with England's rulers. Henry had shown a desire to be on close terms of intimacy with him ever since 1411, when he was governing in the name of his father.² Every effort therefore was made to give Sigismund a fitting welcome when he landed on these shores, though care was taken to emphasise the fact that he was received as a friendly visitor, and not as one claiming to be the imperial overlord of the country.³ Henry even made over his palace of Westminster for the accommodation of his guest, returning himself to Lambeth until May 24th, when all journeyed to Windsor for the celebration of the Feast of St. George, which had been postponed so that the Emperor might be admitted to the Order of the Garter. But the Emperor found that between England and France an arrangement was impossible. The French wished for the restoration of Harfleur, Henry demanded the Brétigny terms, and was supported by the uncompromising attitude of his subjects. Active hostilities between the two countries never ceased. Dorset, in want of provisions at Harfleur, had to make raids into French territory—on one occasion in March, having been intercepted by the enemy, he had hard work to regain his base—and shortly afterwards a Franco-Genoese fleet appeared in the Channel, blockading Harfleur and threatening the English coast.

¹ H. von der Hardt, *Corpus Actorum Magni Constantiensis Concilii* (Frankfort and Leipzig, 1697-1700), iv 259-282, 346-382.

² Foedera, viii 674-675, ix 155-156, 168-169.

³ The earliest allusion to this is in *Translator of Livius*, 67, (8) Cf. Introd., pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.

Yet negotiations went on, Sigismund doing his best, Henry more or less a passive onlooker, and Armagnac, the head of the anti-Burgundian party, proving a bitter opponent of all arrangement. By August all hopes were abandoned. An English expedition was dispatched under Bedford to the relief of Haifleur, which after a fierce sea-fight was safely accomplished, and on the 15th Henry and Sigismund signed at Canterbury an offensive and defensive alliance, which it was agreed on all hands had been necessitated by the uncompromising attitude of the French.¹ Still, in September, Henry crossed to Calais, whither Sigismund had preceded him, to meet a French embassy, led by the Archbishop of Reims, the only result of which was a truce till February 2nd, 1417. The real reason for this journey was to arrange a meeting with Burgundy. Although bound by alliance to England, John "Sans Peur" had only abstained from opposing the English in 1415 in order to procure the discomfiture of his enemies. Indeed in France it was fully recognised that Agincourt was not so much a French as an Armagnac defeat.² If it were necessary to secure his ends, he would make use of the English, but he showed his distrust of his allies by demanding that English hostages should be given before he would come to Calais, where, even then, he refused to bind himself by any definite agreement. Though Henry had prepared a draft treaty, which contained a promise of Burgundian assistance to English arms in France, it remained unexecuted,³ and the only result of the conference was a prolongation of existing truces for two years. The year 1416 was one of constant diplomatic activity, of which the Treaty of Canterbury and the meeting with Burgundy were only the most prominent incidents. Embassies to the Princes of Germany and the Hanseatic towns, the kingdoms of the Iberian peninsula and the Italian cities, all had for their object the isolation of France, which now had been made to betray a lack of straightforwardness in negotiation that enabled the Chancellor to tell Parliament that peace was desirable, but the only means to secure it was to continue the war with redoubled energy.⁴

Foreign diplomacy and successes in war are apt to blind our

¹ *Foedera*, ix. 377-382, St. Denys, vi. 34-36, Ursins, 532. Cf. Sigismund's account of the whole negotiations in *Aus der Kanzlei Sigismunds*, ed. J. Caro (Gotha, 1880), 107-123.

² Ursins, 519.

³ *Foedera*, ix. 394-396.

⁴ *Rot. Parl.*, iv. 94

eyes to the fact that a steady, if not very powerful, under-current of sedition lay beneath the surface of English life. Oldcastle was still at large, and his followers were becoming more and more politicians and less and less religious reformers. During the King's absence in 1415 it had been found necessary to burn two, if not three, recalcitrant heretics. During 1416 heretical pamphlets were being scattered abroad, and Henry Greyndor, bolder than his fellows, was imprisoned for presenting a petition in favour of ecclesiastical disendowment to the King.¹ In September Benedict Wolman, a well-known London Lollard, and John Bekeryng, a Lincolnshire man, were indicted for trying to enlist Sigismund in a plot to set up the false Richard against the existing dynasty, and in the following month William Parchemyner, who had helped Oldcastle to escape from the Tower, was arrested and hanged.² About the same time two disturbances round Hereford on the part of certain servants of Richard Oldcastle were also reported. At Christmas one of Sir John's squires was plotting against the King, and seditious pamphlets were appearing mysteriously in the inns of St. Albans, Reading, and Northampton.³ There was, however, no evidence of any concerted movement of disaffection, and perhaps more pressing from the point of view of the Government was the disturbed condition of Ireland. But since Richard II's wise though unfortunate attempt to pacify that country, an English King was not likely to risk his reputation and his throne there. Henry's sole interest was the renewal of his invasion of France. Money for so great a venture was not easily procured. The debts of the last campaign were not yet fully paid, and already the nation was beginning to grudge the expense of the war. No loan from London in its official capacity was forthcoming, and individual citizens only subscribed a sum of £2160 on good security.⁴ Moreover, the attempt to make the foreigner pay by imposing extra custom duties on merchant strangers had to be abandoned for fear of injuring English trade.⁵ The cost of war had been increasing steadily, for apart from the soldiers hired by indenture, there were many incidental expenses borne by the King himself, such as transport, tools and weapons for sappers and engineers, arrows for the bowmen, and the commissariat

¹ Elmham, *Liber Metricus*, 148, Capgrave, *de Illus. Hen.*, 121.

² *Memorials of London*, 638-643; Cal. of Letter Book I, 164-166

³ Walsingham, ii. 317. ⁴ Cal. of Letter Book I, 202-203. ⁵ *Ibid.*, 185-186.

for those men not provided by indenture, in case the army was not able to live on the country.¹

Thus though the expedition was originally planned for May, it was not till August 1st, 1417, that the English army landed at Touques in Normandy. It consisted of some 10,000 men, though with camp followers and servants it may have approached the 16,000 of the chroniclers, a large field-army for a nation of not more than three million souls, men, women, and children. Henry kept his own counsel with regard to his destination, but it soon became evident that this was to be no mere provocative raid to beguile the French into a pitched battle. The campaign was to prove tedious and without dramatic incident, but it was a real attempt to conquer France, a hopeless task, but at least an honest attempt to justify claims of which Edward III had never understood the meaning. It was obvious that for a purpose such as this Henry must not lose touch with his base, which from a military standpoint was not Harfleur nor yet Calais, but England itself, and to this end he must secure the "lordship" of the English seas which had been lost in his father's reign. Earlier in the year a Genoese fleet, enlisted in the French service, had been driven off by the Earl of Huntingdon, who had lately been appointed to guard the sea to the south and west, and now the Earl of March was commissioned to "skimm the see and kepe the see costes, that no maner enymys durste rowte upon the see".² The war fleet at this time was still largely recruited by the temporary impressment both of ships and sailors, the government undertaking to pay all wages and 3s. 4d. per ton burthen a quarter for each ship.³ Though a certain number of vessels were maintained for purely royal purposes even in Henry IV.'s day, Henry had to build up this nucleus of a royal navy all over again. Several new ships of war were built, and others were bought abroad,⁴ being distinguished from merchantmen by being gaily painted and fitted with sails embroidered with arms and badges. In February, 1417, the "King's ships and vessels" comprised three large ships, three carracks, eight barges, and ten balingers, though probably the list is not exhaustive.⁵ In thus caring for the navy and restoring order

¹ Not to mention surgeons and their assistants (*Foedera*, ix. 237-238).

² *Brut*, 383. Cf. *Foedera*, ix. 466-467.

³ *Rot. Parl.*, iv. 79.

⁴ *Devon*, Issues 335, 338, 339, 349, 351; *Ellis, Letters*, 2nd Series, i. 69-72.

⁵ *Ordinances*, ii. 202-203.

on the high seas, Henry was earning the gratitude of his people, for now, as later, it was universally recognised that the principal object of "good governance" should be to

Cheryshe marchandyse, kepe thamyrolle,
That wee be maysters of the narowe see¹

Yet Henry's precautions were not entirely successful, and in 1420 the French, with the assistance of certain Spanish allies, managed to cover the transport of a Scottish army to France, and defeated the English in a sea-fight off La Rochelle.

The first success of Henry's second campaign was the reduction of Touques on August 9th, after which a council of war decided on an advance towards Caen. There is no doubt that the ultimate destination was Rouen, since it was now Henry's avowed intention to conquer Normandy,² but he desired to reduce the lower part of the duchy before he concentrated his forces on such a strong place as this. As winter was approaching, Caen, a residential town with large suburbs, might provide suitable quarters for the next few months if they were needed. Clarendon, as Constable of the army, was sent on in advance to prevent the burning of these suburbs, and when the main army arrived before the city on August 13th, it found him established at the Abbey of St Stephen, which commanded the southern defences of the town. Soon the fortifications were entirely surrounded, and a fierce cannonade was begun, which "bete adoun both walles and toures, and slow myche pepil yn hur howses and eke yn stretes". By September 3rd the besiegers were ready for a grand assault, which ended in the capture of the town, the castle yielding a few days later. From Caen, Henry sent out a detachment under the Duke of Gloucester, which took Bayeux, and conquered the country round Lisieux, rejoining the main army at Alençon, whither Henry had advanced by way of Argentan. Thence other expeditions were sent out which carried their successes into the heart of Maine. Only the better-fortified towns offered any resistance, the smaller places yielded at once, and the people of the country-side trooped in to take advantage of Henry's promise of safety of life and possessions to all who made their submission. To those who resisted Henry showed himself an angry avenger, and such terrible stories of his cruelty were spread abroad that

¹ *Label of Eng. Policy*, in *Political Songs (Rolls)*, ii. 158.

² *Waurin*, ii. 242.

when the invaders reached Lisieux they found it deserted save for two tottering old people. A French chronicler, writing some years later, emphasized the absolute terror which the very name of the English inspired.¹ The peasants were not alone in this feeling. The Duke of Brittany thought it wise to intercede for the safety of his dominions and those of his young son-in-law, the titular King of Sicily, in Maine and Anjou, and the French Government also opened useless negotiations when Burgundy was hammering at the doors of Paris. But though winter had now come, Henry sat down before Falaise on December 1st, where he met with a far more determined resistance than he had hitherto experienced, for the town did not surrender till January 2nd, and the castle held out till February 16th.²

Henry had now won a long strip of territory from Bayeux and Touques on the North to Bellesme and La Marche on the South, no inconsiderable achievement for seven months' work. He now divided his army into three portions. To Clarence was confided the task of opening up the approach to Rouen, Warwick was sent against Domfront to safeguard the south-eastern corner of the duchy, Gloucester was to reduce the Côtentin. All three met with success, but Domfront took Warwick three months to reduce, and Gloucester, having swept up the Côtentin, found Cherbourg so well fortified that he did not gain its submission till September 29th. Long before this Henry had once more donned his armour, and had advanced to Rouen taking Louviers and Pont de L'Arche on the way. Rouen had lately turned Burgundian, but as Burgundy had snatched the control of French Government from the Armagnacs, he had to play a patriotic game, and his answer to a pursuivant sent by Henry was a declaration of war.³ Still he could do little to help Rouen, which was invested on July 29th, as he dared not leave Paris open to an Armagnac attack. Thus French divisions left the English free to starve out the capital of Normandy. On August 31st the fortress of St. Catherine, which kept open the communications between the garrison and the outer world, was secured: on September 7th Caudebec, which guarded the river approach, agreed to remain neutral, and surrender if Rouen fell. The English army had been reinforced from home,

¹ Basin, i. 26.

² Rot. Norm., 308-315.

³ Delpit, Documents, 222.

⁴ Cal. of Letter Book I. 195, Brut, 385.

and by November Gloucester's contingent from the Côtentin had arrived, but Henry made no assault. Content to see the townsmen slowly starve, he refused to let a horde of non-combatants pass his lines, and while they were dying of starvation in the ditch, those within the town were reduced to all kinds of unaccustomed food :—

They etete doggys, they ete cattys,
They ete myssy, horse and ratty

Meanwhile, the English were well cared for. In a fortified camp they were ready to resist any relieving force that might be sent; provisions poured in from London and the English ports, and the men were kept vigilant by the personal supervision of their leader, who caring neither for fog nor wintry weather, constantly visited the outposts at night. It was on New Year's eve that the besieged showed their first inclination to surrender, but not till the 19th of January, 1419, did Henry enter Rouen in triumph, thus setting the seal to the conquest of Normandy.

Ever since he had landed in 1417 Henry had done his best to organise the administration of Normandy on improved lines. He had begun by separating the official papers of his duchy and kingdom, and by appointing a separate Treasurer and Chancellor for his Norman dominions¹. His determination to prevent all injury to his new subjects, and his reduction of the oppressive "gabelle" or salt tax to a 25 per cent duty² had their effect on all those of inferior rank, who, led by the lesser clergy, readily gave their adherence to the new government. Though with this and similar acts in his mind a French chronicler was fain to confess that the wisdom of Henry's rule fitted him essentially to reduce a country to obedience,³ the Norman gentry, and even the men of substance in the towns, showed no inclination to accept the new government. The offer to recognise the status and possessions of all persons having property to the value of sixty livres Tournois a year, if they took an oath of fealty, was almost entirely ignored, and Henry had to confess that "in substance there is no man, of estate commen yn to the King's obeissance, and righte few gentilmen, the whiche is a thing that causeth the peuple to be ful unstable and is no wonder".⁴ Though the fall of Rouen struck terror into the hearts

¹ Foedera, ix 507, 571.

² St. Denys, vi 480.

³ Ibid., 583-585.

⁴ Ordinances, 351. ii.

of Frenchmen, and induced many fortresses to surrender without resistance ; though, too, several small expeditions carried the tide of conquest yet further while Henry still lay at Rouen ; and though by May only three places in the whole duchy still held out, Henry was beginning to understand that only the divisions which made the French Government powerless had enabled him to win so much territory.

All through the siege of Rouen negotiations had been kept up both with Armagnacs and Burgundians. At one moment the Dauphin offered terms ; at another the French King, under the influence of Burgundy, sent a portrait of his daughter Catherine, whose name had appeared in most of the negotiations.¹ Clarence had long since understood that one great difficulty would be the holding of the fortresses after they had been captured² Henry himself now realised that “to kepe this that he hath in Normandie” would entail just as much expense as the war itself, and he therefore wished to secure terms from his opponents. He was conscious that the Dauphin’s recent anxiety for peace was merely dictated by a desire to use the English as a means to restore himself and his Armagnac friends to power, though, as the leader of opposition, he was more likely to grant generous terms. Such were Henry’s musings as he revealed them to his Council at home,³ and it is obvious that he was considering very seriously the abandonment of his claim to the throne, in return for the cession of Normandy and Aquitaine, the former in full sovereignty, the latter defined in its largest sense to include Poitou. So he arranged a personal interview for March 26th with the Dauphin, but when Henry came to the trysting-place, he found no one there. As one of his followers put it, “the Dauphin hathe broke the seuretee above saide and made the Kyng a ‘Beau nient’ (a fine fool) . . .”⁴ Henry forthwith dispatched Warwick on March 28th to arrange an interview for May 15th with the Burgundian faction, which came off on the 30th of that month in a meadow near Meulan. Thither came the Duke of Burgundy with Queen Isabella and her daughter Catherine, Charles VI being too unwell to be present, and to meet them Henry, accompanied by two brothers and a brilliant escort of nobles and ecclesiastics. Nothing beyond

¹ Elmham, *Vita*, 191; Waurin, ii. 252.

² Ordinances, ii. 350-358.

³ Delpit, *Documents*, 221.

⁴ Ellis, *Letters*, 2nd Series, i. 77.

ceremonial greetings took place on the first day, when Henry was introduced to Catherine, who did not again appear. Wise after the event, a verbose English chronicler waxed eloquent over the first meeting of Henry and his future wife, and described the maiden modesty with which the lady received her first kiss at as great length as he had described the rising of the sun on the day of Agincourt.¹ Negotiations dragged on for a month, Henry demanding the Brétigny terms, the French a renunciation of English claims to the throne of France, but it all ended in high words exchanged by Henry and Burgundy.² Even then Henry did not lose all hope of an arrangement, and on July 5th again dispatched ambassadors to the Burgundian party, but in vain, for within a few days Burgundy and the Dauphin had met and had agreed to unite against the English. As soon as the truce was at an end Pontoise was surprised, "thorough the whiche wynning my forsaid lord hath passage to Parys".³ Clarence having led a reconnoitring party to the gates of the capital, the army moved on, took Vauconvilliers, and sat down before Gisors, one of the three Norman castles not yet subdued. At the news of the fall of Pontoise, Paris was aghast, the Court fled incontinently from St. Denis to Troyes, and Burgundy came to realise that his failure to resist the advancing enemy was placing a weapon in the Armagnacs' hands. It was under these circumstances that he was induced to agree reluctantly to another meeting with his rival at the Bridge of Montereau, where, while he was making his first obeisance to his cousin, he was foully slain by the Dauphin's favourite Tanguy du Châtel and his treacherous associates.

The pages of history contain few more significant incidents than this cold-blooded murder of an unprincipled politician. In vain did the blood-bespattered Dauphin issue a manifesto of justification;⁴ the Burgundians need no longer fear a loss of popularity by allying with the English to avenge such a coward blow. As the Queen explained in a letter to Henry ten days after the murder, the negotiations of Meulan had broken down through the unscrupulous

¹ Elmham, *Vita*, 222.

² *Ibid.*, 212-226; Ursins, 549-552, Waurin, ii. 267-269; Monstrelet, iii.

318-322

³ Letter of Clarence printed in Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, iii. 364.

⁴ Monstrelet, iii. 352-354.

intrigues of the Dauphin, “for our councillors declare that if we and our cousin of Burgundy had accepted your terms, all the barons, knights, cities, and good towns of our lord the King would have abandoned us for our son”.¹ Now she, the new Duke of Burgundy, Philip le Bon, and the Parisians were all ready to reopen negotiations. Without outward signs of his inward joy at the turn of events, Henry proceeded with his conquests. Having taken Gisors, he laid siege to Meulan, which surrendered on October 31st, when an expedition was led by Gloucester up the Seine valley to capture Poissy and St Germain. The King took little active part in these operations, and at the end of November he retired to Rouen, where he devoted himself once more to the organisation of Norman government. The signs of the times were now a little more favourable. Some of the lesser gentry and the burgesses of the towns began to make their submission, trade was recovering from the shock of war, and it was found possible to employ native Normans as inferior officials. Meanwhile, the Burgundian alliance, which Henry had desired all along, was becoming a reality. On December 2nd Philip agreed to support proposals laid before him by the Earl of Warwick, whereby Henry was to marry Catherine and rule France in the name of his father-in-law, who was to accept him as his successor. A truce between Burgundians and English was arranged, all being formally signed, sealed, and delivered by January, 1420. To avenge the death of his father Philip was ready to use any weapon, all other feelings being drowned in hatred of the opposing faction. Thus English and Burgundians carried on the war side by side, overrunning the whole county of Clermont, while the Earl of Salisbury defeated the Armagnacs and their recently arrived Scottish allies in Maine. By April 9th, Charles VI was induced to set his seal to the proposals which Duke Philip had already accepted, though even loyal Burgundians joined with those of Armagnac sympathies in describing the agreement as both wonderful and shameful. In May, Henry made his way to Troyes, where the treaty was solemnly ratified on the 21st of that month, and on Trinity Sunday, June 2nd, Henry and Catherine were made man and wife.

Henry was no sentimentalist. He looked on Catherine merely

¹ Printed in Beaucourt, 186-189.

as a step towards his ambitions, and would have equally willingly married any other bride who could help him to the throne of France. So he spent his honeymoon in besieging Sens. "At this seige"—wrote a cynic in the English host to a friend—"also lyn many worthy Ladyes and Gentilwomen, bothe Frensh and English, of the whiche many of hem begonne the Faitz of Armes long time agoon, but of lyyng at Seiges now they begynne first"¹ Sens yielded, Montereau was taken by storm, and Henry signalled the fact that he was fighting in the cause of the rightful King of France by having certain prisoners hanged before the gates of the castle, as a warning to its defenders. Melun, which was next attacked, showed greater powers of resistance, holding out from July 7th to November 17th, but all in vain, for famine won where the mines and cannon of the besiegers failed. During this siege Henry had had the captive King James of Scotland sent over to him,² in the hope perhaps of inducing the troops sent over by the Scottish Government to abandon their employers. At any rate, he used the presence of James as a pretext for executing some twenty Scottish prisoners, though nothing but a sublime power of self-deception could blind him to the unwarrantable nature of this proceeding. Henry's character was not improving with success. Doubtless he had much to try him. If men writing with a knowledge of later events are to be believed, he was already distrustful of his Burgundian allies. The French, too, did not like their new ruler's brusque manner, his peremptory orders, his neglect of the honours due to the King, and his substitution of Englishmen for Frenchmen in offices of trust.³ The relations of Henry and his future subjects did not improve after his state entry into Paris on December 1st. Though the streets were gaily decked with tapestry, and a Mystery was played in his honour, misery and famine, such as Paris had seldom known before, prevailed. For the last two years provisions had been short in the city, the hot summers had brought disease in their train, and at this very moment men, women, and children were lying dying of hunger on dunghills. Prices at once flew up at the arrival of the royal guests, and the Parisians, at least, were not sorry to see their departure after Christ-

¹ Foedera, ix 910-911

² Devon, Issues 362-363.

³ St. Denys, vi. 380; Monstrelet, iv. 22-23; Chastellain, i. 162-163; Waurin, ii. 351, St. Remy, ii. 27.

mas.¹ Most of January, 1421, Henry spent at Rouen, where he held a meeting of the Estates, but he was bound for home, and on February 2nd he and his wife landed at Dover, where they were received with manifestations of joy, the Barons of the Cinque Ports wading out to the ship, and carrying them in triumph to the shore.

¹ Bourgeois, 665-666; Ursins, 561-562; *Chron. de Normandie*, 202-203; St. Denys, vi. 397.

CHAPTER XX

THE FAILURE OF HENRY V
(1417-1422)

AFFAIRS at home during Henry's long absence in France had run very evenly, under the regency of Bedford, till late in 1419, when Gloucester came over to take his place. There was now less talk of sedition in England, though the departure of the King in 1417 had been the signal for another outburst of Lollard tracts,¹ and it was soon rumoured that Oldcastle had entered into relations with the Scots, had met some Scottish magnate at Pontefract, and had tried to induce him to bring the false Richard into England. At any rate in October, 1417, two simultaneous attacks were made by Albany and Douglas on Berwick and Roxburgh respectively, but both ended so disastrously as to live in Scottish tradition as "the foul raid." An attempt to seize Oldcastle in a serf's house on the St Albans' estates only resulted in the arrest of some of his supporters, and the discovery of further evidence of his heretical leanings, but soon after he was captured in a farmhouse at Broniarth on the Welsh March, by the sons of Sir Griffith Vaughan, after a stout resistance in which he was severely wounded.² He was brought before Parliament at Westminster on December 14th, when he evinced a strong desire to preach. Cut short by his judges, he allowed himself to break into treason, declaring that he did not recognise the Court, as his liege lord was alive in Scotland. Thus "convycte be the clergy of Lollardye, and dampedned before the Iustice unto deth for treason, . . . he was hadde unto the Tour agen, and there he was laide on a hurdil, and drawn through the cite to Saint Gyles Felde, and there was made a new paire of galows,

¹ Otterbourne, 278; Elmham, *Liber Metricus*, 150.

² *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 1st Series, i. 47, Montgomeryshire Collections, i. 290-296; Usk, 131, Walsingham, ii. 327.

and a stronge chayne, and a coler of yron for hym, and there he was hanged and brent on the galous, and alle for his lewdeness and fals opynyons”¹ Thus ended a man whose single-minded purpose even his enemies acknowledged. Like his friend Hus, he suffered death for his religion, but unlike Hus his death did not spur his supporters into renewed effort. He was the last important member of his sect, for though Lollardy continued, and occasional burnings of heretics occurred throughout the fifteenth century, the movement had lost its vital force by becoming involved in the dynastic claims of the House of March. The only other trouble of the moment was an obscure scandal anent the unfortunate Queen-dowager. Joan and her friends had never been popular in England, and her stepson banished many of her foreign attendants “who gave information to the enemy and carried much treasure out of the country”² In 1419 she was accused of having compassed and imagined the King’s death in company with Friar Randolph, her Confessor. Popular report said that they had practised “sorcerye and nigramancye” against his life, and she was committed to Pevensey Castle, while Randolph was brought back from Guernsey, whither he had fled, and placed in the Tower. The accusation of sorcery was more than once used against women for political purposes in the fifteenth century, and here it probably covered some rumoured attempt on the part of the Queen in favour of her captive son, the Count of Richemont. Only on his death-bed did Henry repent of his harsh action, and ordered her release and the restoration of her dower.³

Englishmen still took an interest in the war, and each success was still punctuated with rejoicings, in the capital at any rate. When the news of the fall of Rouen reached London there “were made solemn processions of triumph through the city, with dancing by clergy and people from the shrine of St. Erkenwald to the shrine of St. Edward, not once only, but each Wednesday and Friday”.⁴ Another solemn procession greeted the proclamation of the Treaty of Troyes, and when Henry brought his Queen from Eltham to the Tower, the pageant of 1415 was re-enacted on a smaller scale. On the morrow all classes escorted her with music and singing through the streets hung with arras and costly silks, as according to custom she proceeded in state to Westminster to keep the vigil of her coro-

¹ *Brut*, 386.

² *Rot. Parl.*, iv. 79, 306.

³ *Ibid.*, 247-248

⁴ *Usk*, 132.

nation. But in their hearts men were getting tired of the war. In 1419 there had been considerable difficulty in raising reinforcements, and later in the same year deserters from the army in France were becoming unpleasantly numerous,¹ and abroad it was no secret that the English were hard pressed both for men and money.² Parliament, too, was beginning to get anxious. The Government dared not ask it for money in 1420, when it demanded that Henry should return home as soon as possible, and stipulated for the re-enactment of the statute of Edward III, securing English liberties in the event of the sovereign acquiring the title of King of France. English public opinion, now turning against the war, was no longer formed exclusively by the nobles, or even by the country gentlemen, for the balance of economic power was passing from the feudal to the commercial magnate. No one was quicker to realise this than Henry, who punctuated almost every step he took in France by a letter to the London authorities, thus showing that he understood the truth which in the next century a Carthusian monk impressed on the Duke of Buckingham by telling him that his only hope of political success was "to obtain the love of the community of England".³ The "community" or the "commons" did not mean the people generally, but the new commercial aristocracy. Moreover, it is quite clear from such records as survive, that it was the trader, not the landowner, who was able to lend money. True, some attempt had been made in Henry IV.'s reign to extend taxation from goods to land values, but this is more an indication of the power of the mercantile interest, which wished to shift burdens onto other shoulders, than evidence of the increasing prosperity of landed proprietors. Towns in their corporate capacity, or individual traders, produced by far the largest share of the money raised for the 1415 campaign, and they are much in the majority in the lists of loans during Richard II.'s reign.

The increased prosperity, which made it possible for Englishmen to finance both Government and commercial enterprises, was largely due to the development of the cloth trade, which was now so typical a product of England, that cloth was sent as a present to distinguished foreigners,⁴ and the legislation of the period bear

¹ Cal. of Norman Rolls, Dep. Keeper's Rep., 42, App., 355.

² Letter printed in Beaucourt, i. 329.

³ Dep. Keeper's Rep., iii. 232.

⁴ Foedera, viii. 244.

witness to the growing vitality of this industry. More than a dozen different kinds of worsted were manufactured in East Anglia,¹ and Essex, London, Coventry, and the Western Counties, including Devon and Cornwall, were important centres of manufacture.² The division of labour, too, was developing on all sides, in 1408 for instance, the London cutlers explained that every knife was prepared by three crafts, the blade by the "bladsmythes," the handle and other fitting work by the cutlers and the sheathers,³ and in Coventry this tendency induced the tailors and shear-men to separate their guild organisation from that of the fullers, to which they had hitherto been joined. Side by side with this development of industry and industrial organisation there was a great increase in the mercantile marine. To a certain extent this had been encouraged by the Navigation Act of 1381, whereby English merchants were forbidden to ship their goods in foreign bottoms, though there seems to have been some difficulty in enforcing the measure.⁴ The Commons showed their consciousness that the future of England lay upon the sea, by declaring that the merchant navy was the chief basis of the wealth and prosperity of the kingdom,⁵ and a French observer of English ways had to admit the great number of the English ships, though he doubted whether they were used to the best advantage.⁶ But it was to the increasing enterprise of the trader that the advance in English shipping was really due. Italian merchants still frequented England, and English ships were as yet an unusual sight in the Mediterranean, but they became more and more frequent visitors to the ports of Northern and Western Europe, and in 1392 three hundred English ships sailed from the port of Dantzig.⁷ English mariners bent on fishing even penetrated as far north as Iceland, thirty or more ships reaching the island in 1413, and twenty-five being wrecked there in the stormy winter in 1419, apart from those which returned in safety.⁸ Cloth and wool were England's chief exports, though the list of commodities sent to foreign lands included also salt, lead, tin, yarn, hides, honey, fish, butter,

¹ Rot. Parl., iii. 637.

² *Ibid.*, iii. 437, iv. 52, Statutes, ii. 64, 134

³ *Memorials of London*, 567

⁴ Statutes, ii. 18, Rot. Parl., iii. 278, 296, 444

⁵ Rot. Parl., iv. 79

⁶ *Débat des Hérauts* (Soc. des Anciens Textes Fr., 1877), 25.

⁷ Customs Rolls cited in Wylie, *Henry IV*, ii. 74.

⁸ *Íslenskir Annálar*, 386, 388, 390, 392.

and cheese¹ The most significant sign was that the English Government was developing a commercial policy. It would be too much to declare that Henry V.'s wars were dictated by considerations of trade, though Frenchmen believed that they were aimed at the merchants of France, Spain, Denmark, and Scotland.² Still, since the Lancastrians had gained the throne, trade had loomed large in their diplomatic activities. Negotiations with Burgundy had been mostly based on these considerations, and the commercial agreement of 1407 laid the foundation of English trade with Antwerp; the truces arranged with Brittany provided for the free intercourse of merchants, negotiations between Castile and England had a commercial tone, and ambassadors sent to the King of Arragon in 1416 were given definite instructions to treat for mercantile intercourse.³ Portuguese merchants were frequent visitors to English shores, and so many English lived in Lisbon that by 1471, if not earlier, they had a chapel there of their own.

The dealings of the Company of the Staple, the first of those great societies which were to develop England's commerce, were limited to those commodities, principally raw wool, for which the staple system had been provided, and with the decline of the export of wool it too very naturally fell into obscurity, giving place to the Merchant Adventurers, who were chiefly interested in the export of cloth. The latter dated their privileges from the grant made in 1407 by Henry IV. to the merchants trading in Holland,⁴ apparently an offshoot of the London Mercers' Company.⁵ It was as Merchant Adventurers, large wholesale dealers and importers who "ventured" their capital on the high seas, that most of the great commercial figures of the age emerged.

No better example of the great merchants of the time can be found than Richard Whittington. The strange maze of legend that has gathered round this merchant prince makes us realise how it was possible for a London trader to strike the imagination of his age. He may never have sat on a milestone listening to Bow Bells, nor as an apprentice used his cat as his only merchandise to venture

¹ Rot. Parl., m. 501-502. Cf. *Laonicus Chalcocondylas, Historiarum Libri Tres* (Bonnas, 1843), 93.

² *Débat des Hérauts*, 26.

³ *Foedera*, ix. 410-412.

⁴ *Ibid.*, viii. 464-465

⁵ For the Merchant Adventurers see G. Schanz, *Englische Handelspolitik* (Leipzig, 1881), I. 327-351, II. 539-589.

in his master's ship, but these legends show that to later generations he was the type of England's nascent enterprise, and to men who knew him

That loode-sterre and chefe chosen floure.¹

The son of a country gentleman of Gloucestershire, he came up to London as a lad, being apprenticed to Sir Ivo Fitzwaryn, a west country landowner and merchant adventurer of London, whose daughter he eventually married. By the end of the fourteenth century he was a man of accredited position, becoming Mayor by royal appointment for the first time in 1397, and at the expiration of his term being re-elected by his fellow-citizens.² His vast fortune was made partly by supplying costly garments to royalty and the Court, partly by lending money. Before Henry IV ascended the throne he had bought velvets and damasks from the already prosperous citizen, who later provided much of the trousseaux of that King's two daughters, and strangely enough also some of the money to pay for them. Henry IV was constantly in his debt, Henry V. also used him as one of his bankers,³ and entrusted him with the supervision of public works.⁴ He served his city in Parliament, and at his death without issue left the whole of his considerable estate to charities.⁵ Throughout his career he illustrated the business acumen and the princely liberality of the merchant princes of his age. In his person he exemplifies how one whose wealth was founded on trade could play an important part in national affairs, and how no irremovable barrier divided the country gentleman from the counting-house. Inter-marriage between knightly and burgess families was common, and it was as honourable to be an adventurer on the seas of commerce as on the field of war. Burgesses were often, like Whittington, of gentle birth, while at the same time men like William Sevenoke could rise from nothing to be Mayor of London. It was indeed a passing of the old order of things. The status of feudalism was rapidly giving place to a far different organisation of society.

Consequently, throughout the fifteenth century there is a tendency to divide class from class according to its wealth, most noticeable

¹ Political Songs (Rolls), ii. 178

² Cal. of Letter Book H, 436, 440. The first official mention of him is in 1379 as making the smallest contribution to a subscription list (*ibid*, 126).

³ Devon, Issues, 362, Foedera, ix. 310-311

⁴ Foedera, ix. 78, Ordinances, ii. 168 169.

⁵ Cal. of London Wills, ii. 432.

perhaps in the guilds, where in the past all men had been equal. In the tailors guild of Exeter there was a clear distinction between members who belonged to the masters "fleleschippe and clothynge" and members who were not privileged of the "forsayde ffraternyte"¹. Of the London grocers in 1430 fifty-five had the full livery, seventeen wore the hood, and forty-two householders were outside the livery, though members of the company. Amongst many other London companies the same thing occurred. Thus after his seven years' service the apprentice might never rise beyond the rank of a journeyman, who as a rule was excluded from any share in the management of his guild. This resulted in the combination of journeymen against their masters. Such movements occurred at Bristol.² Three times did the journeymen weavers of Coventry attempt to form a trades union, and in 1424 they not only struck work, but prevented other workmen from taking their places, and in the end the town authorities had to intervene to settle the dispute.³ The Parliament of 1425 complained of the successful resistance made by the "chapters and assemblies" of masons to the Statute of Labourers. Clearly the wages question was now almost as ripe as it had been before the rebellion of 1381. In 1395 a Nottingham jury declared that "all the carpenters, all the plasterers, all the stonecutters, and all the labourers take too much for their craft by the day, against the statute of our Lord the King,"⁴ and Parliament made a similar complaint in 1425. That wages were rising despite all attempts to the contrary is obvious from the parliamentary records, and from the considerable increase allowed by statute in 1445, when a mason or carpenter was allowed fourpence a day with, or fivepence a day without, food, tilers, slaters, and builders, threepence with food and other labourers twopence. In winter, wages were one penny less all round, due doubtless to the fact that the hours were shorter.⁵ No trading was allowed on Sundays, holy days, and vigils.⁶

On the whole, it would seem that while there was a good deal of unemployment in the towns, the opposite was the case in the country. Such is one interpretation of the statute of 1406 which

¹ English Guilds, 313.

² *Little Red Book of Bristol*, II. 151.

³ *Coventry Leet Book*, 91.

⁴ *Nottingham Records*, I. 274.

⁵ Statutes, II. 338.

⁶ Hist MSS Rep. xi, Part 3, 169, *Records of Grocers' Co.* (ed. Kingdon, 1886), II. 190.

forbade the apprenticing of country children to town trades, and the avowed reason for the later restriction of the number of apprentices attached to each master in London.¹ At the same time agricultural pursuits were supplemented in the country district by the introduction of manufacturing industries, and manor rolls reveal that villein services had been much lightened, having also lost much of their old meaning, and that rents had become fixed and stationary. As the century proceeded it became more and more difficult to obtain labour for agriculture,² wages were increasing so steadily that between 1388 and 1445 those of carters and shepherds were exactly doubled,³ and this, combined with the development of the cloth industry, induced landowners to enclose their lands, and devote themselves rather to sheep-rearing than to corn-growing. But Englishmen could still boast of the fine arable lands of their country, where "wheat, rye, and oats, as well as all kinds of vegetables" grew abundantly, of the spacious parks and lack of waste or uncultivated ground, of the plentiful supply of oxen, cows, swine, and horses, above all of the splendid flocks of sheep which provided the foundation of economic stability. At the same time a Frenchman's sneer, that while in France they had fine castles, in England there were only simple manor houses, falls flat with those who prefer prosperity to pomp.⁴

It was thus a nation instinct with new life, aware, if but dimly, of new possibilities in the future, to which Henry returned after his long absence in France. It was a propitious time to develop prosperity and progress on the basis of a new-found peace, but Henry had nothing to offer his people but the sad gospel of an unproductive war. So far the war had helped to secure command of the sea and to protect southern ports from plunder, but to carry it further meant a drain on English resources such as the country could not stand. Nevertheless, as soon as the coronation festivities were over he set forth with his wife on a royal progress through the country, undertaken more to stir up enthusiasm for the war, than to learn his duties as an administrator. Having passed through the Welsh March, he was in the North, having just paid

¹ Cal. of Letter Book K, 200.

² See the experience of Sir W. Plumpton's bailiff in 1469, *Plumpton Correspondence*, 20-22.

³ Statutes, II 57, 338.

⁴ *Débats des Hérauts*, 3, 35, 42.

his respects at the shrine of St John of Beverley, when news reached him that his brother Clarence had been defeated and slain at Beaugé, and he forthwith turned southwards to meet Parliament on May 4th. Little save the Chancellor's opening speech betrayed that the country was at war, and most of the session was occupied in private matters, and in such purely domestic and commercial concerns as the reform of coinage. Henry dared not ask Parliament for money,¹ though his revenue was insufficient for ordinary current expenses, and his debts, as well as those of his father, were still unpaid. The Bishop of Winchester stepped into the breach with a loan of £14,000, but not without securing from the King a ratification of the debt in Parliament, together with the £8306 18s. 8d. still due to him on former loans. Others, less willing, were compelled to lend to the King, who, as one writing at the moment says, "rending evry man throughout the realm, who had money, be he rich or poor, designs to return to France again in full strength".²

The short session over, Henry at once crossed to Calais on June 10th with the Duke of Gloucester and the Earls of March and Warwick, Bedford being once more left as regent. The force that he took with him consisted of slightly over 1000 men, but this number could only be raised by having recourse to impressment, and care had to be taken that only well-born men, yeomen, or the sons of yeomen, should be chosen as archers.³ Even then there was a fear that the men would desert at the first opportunity, and some contingents only attained full strength after the campaign had begun. The situation in France was far from satisfactory, thanks to the defeat of Clarence, due though it was far more to the rashness of the English commander than to the superior quality of the enemy. From the first it had been thought that the Scottish allies of the French would turn the balance,⁴ and now they had practically single-handed inflicted the first check to English arms. Not without reason did the Scottish chroniclers celebrate the event with peans of joy, even though they had to record that the Highland soldiers were rather unpopular in France, owing to their healthy appetites.⁵ Still, the Earl of Salisbury had done something

¹ Gregory, 142.

² Usk, 133.

³ Add. MSS. 4603, f. 99.

⁴ Letter of Cardinal of St Mark in Beaucourt, i. 329

⁵ Scotichronicon, ii. 459, 460-461; *Liber Pluscardensis*, i. 354.

to restore the prestige of English arms, and Alençon had driven off a besieging force, though the Dauphin was threatening Chartres and advancing on Paris. It was Henry's original intention "to have taried somewhat" in Picardy "for to have sette hit with Goddes help in better governance,"¹ but instead, he at once advanced to Mont-treuil, where Burgundy met him, and having crossed the Somme at Abbeville, he pushed on to Gisors, where he left the army under the command of Gloucester, while he paid a flying visit to Paris Gloucester led the army to Mantes, where Henry rejoined, as did also Burgundy, who had left at Abbeville. The relief of Chartres had been the first work planned for the army, but on his way to Mantes Henry learnt that "the saide pretense Dauphin" had raised the siege and had returned hastily into Touraine.² Henry now decided to besiege Dreux, a strong town near the Norman border, which had been harassing its neighbours for some time. Reinforcements had come up both from England and from the various forces already in France, and James of Scotland, whom Henry had brought with him from England, was associated with Gloucester in command, but the Scottish King's appointment was merely nominal, and intended to put the Scottish allies of the Armagnacs in the wrong. From July 18th to August 8th the garrison held out, and then agreed to surrender if not relieved in twelve days. On August 20th the English troops entered the town.

Hitherto Henry's military operations had extended little beyond the borders of Normandy, but it began to dawn upon him that he could not hope to win France by the slow if sure methods which had secured the Duchy. His object now was to goad the Dauphin on to action. He had hoped that the siege of Dreux might draw the French to attempt its relief,³ and that was perhaps the reason that he himself had taken no part in the siege, but had held himself in readiness to march out and do battle with the relieving force. Only the prestige of a second Agincourt could make his title of "Regent of France" a reality, and at the same time the disastrous fiasco of his grandfather's famous march through France in 1373 taught him the danger of any operations far removed from his base. It was with joy therefore that he learnt, towards the end of August, that the enemy was wintering

¹ Letter of Henry in Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, iii. 365.

² *Ibid.*, 365-366.

³ Chastellain, i. 280.

on the Loire not far from Beaugency, and in all haste he marched his army thither. For fifteen days the English vainly waited for the French to attack, while the Earl of Suffolk tried to get into touch with them on the south side of the river. Further tarrying in this "unfruitful country" was impossible; men and beasts alike were dying of starvation, and with a heavy heart Henry turned eastwards. The suburbs of Orleans were captured, but an attack on the town itself was not deemed practicable, and on October 6th the English army sat down before Meaux, having taken Villeneuve-le-roi on the way.¹ The English did not reduce Meaux till May, thanks to the wintry weather and the determined resistance of the garrison.

Meanwhile, some Burgundian successes had greatly improved the outlook, and by 1422 the Dauphin's power was practically non-existent north of the Loire. But the position of the English was anything but hopeful. England had almost run dry as a recruiting reservoir, and in January, 1422, Henry sent an urgent appeal for further help to the King of Portugal,² only a month after envoys had been dispatched to Sigismund and the German princes "for to have Souccours of Men, the which myght never by lyke-heed be more behoveful unto him, considered that he is now in the point and conclusion of his labour". He was ready to pay for such assistance at the same rate as he paid his own subjects, that is "15 Francs for the Month for a Spere," and if such wages were considered too small, he would urge his allies "to considre the grete charge that he hath born many Yeres continuing his Weires," and the danger that he was in from the Scottish and Castilian troops that were helping the Dauphin. There was almost a pathetic note in the message, personal to Sigismund himself, urging him to "come and do the King succise after his many Promesses and often tymes wryting" that he would do so as soon as he had settled the problem of "Heretiks and Lollardes of his Rewme of Boeme (Bohemia)".³ Henry was beginning to understand that he had undertaken a task beyond his resources. In June he had to send for fresh reinforcements from England,⁴ and though he had recently received a small vote from Parliament, he showed signs of

¹ Elmham, *Vita*, 311-314, *Gesta*, 153-154, Monstrelet, iv. 70-71, Chastellain, 1. 281-284; Waurin, ii. 384-385, St Remy, 1. 39.

² *Foedera*, x. 167-168. ³ *Ibid.*, 161-163. ⁴ Add. MSS. 4603, ff. 145-146.

contemplating the possibility of compromise with the enemy, and even went so far as to explain to Sigismund "what good and proffit myght ryse if there were Pees and Rest amongs Cristen Princes ; for thanne myght they togeder entende ayeins Miscreants, in encrece and augmentation of Christien Feith, aswel as to the good of the Chirche,"¹ but this does not come well from a man whose whole life had been directed to the pursuit of personal ambition under the cloak of a religious sanction.

Plans, diplomacy, even the indomitable optimism of the King were of no avail. His days were numbered. In May he entered Paris with his wife, who had come from England after the birth of her son, but his health was failing rapidly. General exhaustion, due to his many labours, complicated by dysentery caught in the trenches before Meaux, laid him low. In search of health he removed to Senlis, believing that the heat made the French capital unhealthy. The news of a Dauphinois success roused him to one more effort, but he was too ill to ride, and had to be carried in a litter. At Corbeil he was compelled to give in, and the army proceeded, while he returned to the castle of Vincennes, where in the early hours of September 1st he passed away, muttering with his dying breath that if God had granted him the conquest of France, it had been his intent to lead a crusade, and reconquer the Holy Sepulchre.

¹ Foedera, x 162

CHAPTER XXI

GOVERNMENT BY COUNCIL
(1422-1435)

H ENRY V. has left a deep mark on the pages of national history. As a general he was obviously superior to Edward III., with whom he is naturally compared ; in private life he soon threw off the recklessness of his youth, and from his father's death to the days of his own marriage practised the strictest continence¹. He was devout in the observances of his faith, a patron of the friars, and among other religious houses he founded the Carthusian monastery of Jesus of Bethlehem at Sheen, and, on the opposite bank of the Thames, Sion House as home for monks and nuns of the Order of St. Bridget. The simplicity and strength of his character were recognised by friends and foes alike, but perhaps his most remarkable trait was that care for his less fortunate subjects, which made him lend an ever-ready ear to their complaints and to bid his Chancellor in one case "see that the poorer partye suffre no wrong".² Self-deception was his chief weakness, his conscience was ever his accomplice not his guide, and no thoughtfulness in particular detail can atone for the fact that by his revival of the French war he laid up a store of political and economic problems for his English subjects. His unsparing efforts to secure the throne of France undermined his constitution and directly procured his death ; he killed himself in following his own selfish ends at the early age of thirty-five, and thus left a defenceless minor not quite nine months old to succeed him, one, too, in whom his ambitious marriage with Catherine of France had implanted the seeds of insanity. The pomp and magnificence of his obsequies, the slow progress of the funeral cortège through France to Rouen, thence to Calais, Dover, and through London to Westminster

¹ Livius Translator, 5.

² Letter printed in *Gesta*, p. xxiv.

Abbey, the solemn procession of London's citizens clothed in black which met his corpse at St. George's Bar, the flambeaux of the white-gowned torchbearers who lined the streets, the chants of the parish clergy who censed the body as it passed their respective churches, the whole splendour of mediaeval pageantry which caused a foreign chronicler to declare that "greater pomp and expense were made than had been done for two hundred years at the interment of any King of England,"¹ all this could not conceal the tragedy of his career. The Frenchman's sneer that, judged by the honour done to his name, men might seem to have ascertained that he was a saint in Paradise,² is a truer epitaph than the adulation of his subjects. But great abilities, nobility of character, personal magnetism were all thrown away. To an aged writer, who took up his pen for the last time on the eve of Henry's last campaign, the outlook seemed big with the possibilities of disaster—"Woe is me; mighty men and treasure of the realm will most miserably disappear about this business. And in truth the grievous taxation of the people to this end being unbearable, accompanied with murmurs and with smothered curses among them from hatred of the burden, I pray that my supreme master become not in the end a partaker of the sword of the wrath of the Lord."³ Was it the glimmering of this truth that visited Henry as he lay in the shadow of death, when springing up in his bed he seemed to wrestle with some evil spirit, crying "Thou hast! thou liest! my portion is with the Lord Jesus Christ"?⁴ Sedition was still in the air. In 1420 the Trumpington story had been revived in London, and it was somewhat significant that since the summer of 1421 Sir John Mortimer, cousin of the Earl of March, had been imprisoned on suspicion of treason. Before the reign of Henry VI. was two years spent he was executed for plotting to slay Gloucester and the Bishop of Winchester, and to place the Earl of March on the throne. The details of his plot are suspect, as they rest on the evidence of an "*agent provocateur*,"⁵ but they gain some support from the fact that it was just at this moment that the Earl of March incurred the displeasure of the Government by bringing a suspiciously large

¹ Monstrelet, iv. 113-115; Cal. of Letter Book K., 2-3, Gesta, 161-163; Chastalain, i. 332-333; Foedera, x 255-257.

² Monstrelet, iv. 116.

³ Usk, 133.

⁴ Gesta, 160.

⁵ Rot. Parl., iv. 202; Chron. of London, 282-283; Cal. of Letter Book K., 24-25.

retinue to the meeting of Parliament, and by ostentatiously keeping open house at the residence of the Bishop of Salisbury. Indeed his demeanour was so threatening that he was ordered to take up his appointment as Lieutenant of Ireland, where shortly afterwards he died of the plague¹. His estates and claims devolved on his nephew the young Richard of York, son of Cambridge, the conspirator of Southampton, who could not for some years prove a serious rival to Henry VI., but this was only a postponement of the almost inevitable struggle.

Well might the chronicler quote the old adage, "Woe to the land when the King is a child,"² for rivalries and personal ambitions began at once to disturb the surface of public life. Three men stood out from the rest as likely to influence the destinies of the nation—the late King's two surviving brothers, Bedford and Gloucester, and the Bishop of Winchester. Bedford had played an important, if not brilliant, part during the preceding reign. Though on two occasions he had been summoned to France, his main activities had been devoted to the government of England during the King's absences, where he had shown himself a level-headed administrator so far as he had been tested. With none of Henry V's brilliance or politic self-deception, he was a conscientious, hard-working statesman, whose strength of character and lack of imagination might have saved England from the disasters which threatened her internal peace. On the other hand, his brother Humphrey, versatile and brilliant, endowed with the more taking but superficial qualities of his brother Henry, seemed to have inherited the character of his grandfather John of Gaunt. He had proved himself an able soldier abroad and an efficient regent at home, but he was lacking in insight, too ready to leap from one high-flown project to another. Lacking in determination, he could never follow any plan to its logical conclusion, and was devoid of tact in trying to secure his own way. Unlike Bedford he could not assume a judicial attitude, but by his assertions of power only irritated, when he should have soothed, the conflicting ambitions which took the place of statesmanship in the days of Henry VI. Beside these two brothers stood Henry Beaufort, the Bishop of Winchester. As the legitimised son of a royal prince, his birth had taught him to push himself forward. As a man he was un-

¹ *Chron. Hen. vi.*, 6; *Brut*, 431.

² *Walsingham*, ii 344

scrupulous and impatient of control, as a Churchman he was more ecclesiastical than religious, a descendant of that long line of clerical statesmen who had influenced for good and ill the trend of national history. He had dabbled in politics under Henry IV., and had acted as money-lender-in-chief to Henry V., whom he had served as Chancellor, resigning, however, in 1417. Nominally his resignation was handed in to enable him to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land,¹ though more probably Beaufort was anxious to play a part at Constance, where the English representatives at the Council were feeling the recent loss of their great leader, Robert Hallam, Bishop of Salisbury.² Many thought that Beaufort was aiming at the papacy—it seems that his name was mentioned as a possible candidate during the ensuing election—³ but he secured the favour of the new Pope Martin V., who forthwith bestowed upon him a Cardinal's hat. The King, however, in answer to a strongly worded protest from Archbishop Chichele refused to allow the bishop to accept this honour. At the death of Henry V. new possibilities opened up for Beaufort, who realised how he might use a minority to his own aggrandisement by throwing his influence into the scale against his most obvious rival, his nephew the Duke of Gloucester.⁴

The first skirmish of that political battle, which was ultimately to distract all England, was fought round the appointment of a regent for the baby King. It might have seemed natural that Gloucester should still continue to rule the country under the terms of his commission as Lieutenant of the Kingdom for Henry V., more particularly as this seems to have been the wish of the late King. As he lay dying, Henry had made dispositions for the future, committing the regency of France to Bedford, and that of England to Gloucester. But the latter was doubtless already identified with his dead brother's desire to support the "porer partie," as later his popularity among the Londoners of every class seems to suggest, and this alarmed the lords of the Privy Council, who were also doubtless a little tired of taking the second place. Now with a minor on the throne, Gloucester was made to feel his new position at once. When the Bishop of Durham formally resigned the Chancellorship, Gloucester was only allowed to receive the seal from him in the presence and in the name of the King and not as regent, official documents

¹ *Foedera*, ix. 467-468.

² *Walsingham*, ii. 320.

³ See *ibid.*, 466.

⁴ *Hardyng*, 390-391.

were sealed "Teste Rege" and no longer "Teste Custode," as had been the practice while Henry V was abroad, and when Parliament was summoned, the first writ was addressed to Gloucester himself, whereas under the regency the regent had had no writ addressed to him¹. The Duke naturally protested. On November 6th he complained to the Council of the terms in which he was commissioned to open and dissolve Parliament "by assent of the Council," as a departure from precedent and prejudicial to his rights. The lords, however, were quite firm, and refused to alter the words he disliked. Nevertheless, Gloucester was determined to be supreme, and his brother John of Bedford was equally hostile to conciliar control, for he wrote in haste to the Mayor and Aldermen of London, urging them not to prejudice by any act of theirs his claims to the government of the country, which he was informed on reliable authority fell to him as next of kin by the laws and ancient usage of the realm². Doubtless Bedford was, as he said, inspired by no desire for "worldly worship," but he knew what the danger of conciliar government would be, and his claim was dictated by a desire to keep the control of the government in the hands of those who had a personal stake in the strength of the monarchy.

The preliminary skirmishes having been fought, each side arrayed its forces for battle in the Parliament which met on November 9th, when Gloucester claimed the regency openly, as next of kin to the reigning sovereign and as the man designed for that post by Henry V. Whereupon the Lords Spiritual and Temporal "had greet and long deliberation and advis, serched precydentes of the governaill of the land in tyme and cas semblable . . . toke also information of the lawes of the land of suche persones as be notably lerned therynne," and on December 5th decided that the claim was invalid, that no precedent or law admitted of the hereditary title, and that the late King could not dispose of the government of the kingdom after his death save with the consent of the Estates.³ Word for word the answer of the lords might have been used more than three centuries later by Pitt with regard to the claims made by Fox, in the name of the Prince of Wales, when George III went mad. Yet a great difference lay behind the form of words. The constitutionalism of the fifteenth was even less democratic than that

¹ *Foedera*, x. 453-454; *Lords' Report*, iii. 856.

² *Delpit, Documents*, 233

³ *Rot. Parl.*, iv. 326.

of the eighteenth century. The denial of Gloucester's claim was made by the Lords without reference to the Commons; it was inspired by the same spirit which had found voice through a Thomas of Lancaster or a Thomas of Gloucester. The outcome of the matter was that Bedford was made Protector of England so long as he remained in the country, his place being taken automatically by Gloucester when he was abroad. The commissions were made out "during the King's pleasure," and the Protector's power was strictly limited, the Council being supreme in practically all matters of state. It was even ordered that all writs were to be issued in the King's name, a procedure which had its comic side when he was made solemnly to empower his nurse to punish him when he was naughty.¹ The personnel of the Council was fairly representative of the various estates of the governing classes, but the presence of Beaufort himself and his brother the Duke of Exeter at the board, together with others who later became identified with his party, enabled him to control its action.

From the first conciliar government was not a success. Parliament could not be induced to grant a subsidy, and only renewed the customs duties with some qualification, and this despite the fact that the debts of the last two Kings were still unpaid.² Every day it became more apparent that Henry V had died leaving wages unpaid and services unrewarded, so that the greatest economy was needed, but though the Council took care to wring the uttermost farthing out of those who had to pay money into the Treasury,³ it showed no disposition to economise in the salaries of its members. The Protector received the handsome sum of 8000 marks yearly, and later a scale of payment for councillors was drawn up, ranging from 300 marks to £40, according to the recipient's rank.⁴ The Privy Council indeed had been becoming more and more a body of professional politicians ever since the accession of Henry IV. In 1406 the Commons had petitioned that the "Lords of the Council should be reasonably guredoned for their labour," and the said Lords, like most officials, knew how to make themselves comfortable at the nation's expense.⁵ Conciliar government promised to prove somewhat expensive, quite apart from the unfortunate effects of the dissensions which appeared as soon as Parliament met again in

¹ Ordinances, iii. 143.

² Rot. Parl., iv. 172-173, 323-324.

³ Ordinances, iii. 39.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 154-155.

⁵ Devon, Issues 274.

October, 1423 Then, not only were new members introduced to the board, but stringent regulations were drawn up which forbade any member to answer a petition on his own responsibility, or in matters of foreign policy to go behind the action of the Council as a body, and express opinions contrary to its decisions¹ Even on matters of Scottish policy each party was ready to attack the other James I. had now been nearly eighteen years a prisoner, but all through 1423 negotiations for his release had been going on, and on September 10th a treaty had been signed at York whereby the Scots agreed, in return for the liberation of their King, to pay £40,000 for his maintenance in England. Gloucester was warmly thanked in Parliament for his energy in bringing about this result, but it seemed as though Beaufort was likely to reap the material advantage. All through the negotiations there had been allusion to a possible marriage between James and some noble English lady. It was an open secret that this was Joan Beaufort, daughter of the late Earl of Somerset, with whom he had fallen deeply in love, and in due course these two were married, and the April of 1424 found the King of the Scots once more a free man and confirming the treaty at Melrose. In later years Gloucester accused Beaufort of having carried the whole matter through without consulting the Commons, and "all to wed his nece to the saide Kyng,"² a charge which shows that political rivalry was entering every department of public activity, and that whereas Beaufort based his power on the Lords of the Council, the Protector was avowedly the ally of the Commons.

The days of the Protectorate of Henry VI. were a mournful time for English prosperity, marked as they were by increasing dissensions at home and a turning of the tide of conquest abroad. Though so far as administration was concerned they were kept quite separate, the war and the internal government of England reacted one on the other, and, as the years went by, it became more and more evident that while the grievous sore of French division was slowly healing, that of England was slowly festering. The man who held all the trump cards was the Duke of Burgundy, whose support could change the fortunes of one side or the other, as Henry V. had foreseen when on his death-bed he had urged his hearers to do

¹ Rot. Parl., iv. 201; Ordinances, iii 151.

² Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, ii 444.

their utmost to keep him faithful to the English cause. In France Bedford did his utmost to obey this command. On April 17th, 1423, he induced the Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany to sign a defensive alliance, based on the marriage of Burgundy's two sisters, Margaret and Anne, to the Dukes of Brittany and Bedford respectively. Still the two French Dukes showed the hollowness of their professions of friendship by providing secretly for a possible reconciliation with the Dauphin,¹ a course not perhaps remarkable in the case of Burgundy, as he was already furious at the action of Gloucester, who had put a spoke in the wheel of certain ambitions of his in the Low Countries. John the Fearless had designs on the territory of Jacqueline, Countess of Holland and Hainault since her father's death in 1417, and had driven her into an uncongenial marriage with his kinsman John Duke of Brabant, an impotent weakling, in the hopes that a childless marriage might lead to the reversion of these extensive territories to himself. Disgusted with her husband, she fled secretly to Calais and thence, with Henry V.'s warm approval, sought an asylum in England. Henry had before this cast his eyes on Jacqueline as a possible weapon in his diplomatic duel with the Duke of Burgundy,² and there seems some reason to believe that he now helped to engineer her flight, with a view to a possible marriage with his youngest brother. In any case within five months of Henry's death Gloucester was duly married to the Countess. The contracting parties seem to have sought legal opinion, and they could make out quite a good case for declaring the marriage with Brabant null and void, for when in 1428 the decision was given against them on appeal to Rome, the Pope's judgment was dictated more by political considerations than ecclesiastical law. In England Gloucester's marriage was at once accepted, and later in the year his bride was recognised as Duchess of Gloucester.³ Soon, however, men began to realise the dangers to public policy which this entailed, and the Council was warned by the University of Paris that Burgundy's resentment was very real, and that the position held by England in France had its "root and origin" in Burgundian support.⁴ Bedford did his utmost to appease the quarrel between Brabant and Gloucester. But Humphrey made an agreement impossible by levying

¹ Plancher, *Preuves*, iv. p. xxvii.

² Rot. Parl., iv. 242.

³ Ordinances, ii. 241.

⁴ *Journal des Savants* (1899), 192-194.

troops and crossing to the Low Countries in October, 1424, to win back his wife's lands. His campaign in Hainault, brought him neither glory nor increased territory, and the following April saw him back in England, tired both of the project and his newly married wife.

In view of his position at home nothing could have been more foolish than Gloucester's mad expedition, for while he was away his rival Beaufort, who took care to have his own correspondent with the army in Hainault,¹ had been acting as regent, on the strength of his recent appointment to the Chancellorship. Nevertheless, when Parliament met it proved itself quite ready to sanction a large loan to the Protector, though the finances of the kingdom were in a very unsatisfactory condition, and to meet a deficiency of £200,000 the Commons allowed the ruinous system of borrowing to be used. No tenth or fifteenth was voted, though the customs duties were granted for a limited time,² but only after "moche altercacyon by-twyne the lordys and the comyns for tonage and poundage," which was only granted in return for legislation compelling foreign merchants to reside in registered lodgings.³ The people of the towns were beginning to make their influence felt in politics, and they were bitterly opposed to Beaufort, many Londoners had a burning desire to "have thrown him in Temyse to have tauht him to swymme with wengis,"⁴ and when it became known that he had used his influence to nullify recent promises with regard to foreign merchants "there was moche hevynesse and trowbylle in thys londe".⁵ Here then was material ready to support Gloucester, whose return had provoked renewed dissensions in the Council, and soon Beaufort and he were quarrelling openly over the former's instructions to the man he had placed in command of the Tower, to exclude all "stronger thanne he," especially the Protector. Armed men were gathered in the Bishop's palace in Southwark, but their attempt to enter the city by force failed, thanks to the intervention of the Mayor. Beaufort declared that his appeal to arms was intended to obstruct the Protector's plan of removing the young King from Eltham Palace to some place under his control without the consent of the Council, and he at once urged

¹ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, ii. 397-400, 409-411.

² Rot. Parl., iv. 275-276, 277.

⁴ *Chronicles of London*, 81.

³ Gregory, 157.

⁵ Gregory, 157.

Bedford to return home, "for by my troth if you tarry, we shall put this land in adventure of a field, such a brother you have here; God make him a good man"¹ It might be presumed that since the Hainault expedition Bedford was quite ready to believe anything against his brother, and when he arrived Beaufort clung to him with such assiduity that his enemies the Londoners met with a very cold reception when they waited, with gifts in their hands, to greet the man who now by his return became automatically Protector of the country. The Council, too, was under Beaufort influence, and refused Gloucester's demand that the Chancellor should resign office pending the inquiry, and evaded the reasonable request that, if a personal interview were arranged, the Bishop's unnecessarily large retinue should be dismissed.² Under these circumstances it was impossible to effect a reconciliation before the meeting of Parliament which was called to Leicester for February 15th, 1426.

The "Parliament of Battes"—so called from the staves brought by members and their servants instead of other weapons forbidden for this season—took ten days to get to business, when pressure by the Commons made the Lords induce the two principals to submit their differences to a specially appointed commission. Before this body Gloucester laid a heavy indictment against the Chancellor, who replied that the Tower had been garrisoned because Gloucester had neglected to do so, and that the instructions to exclude the Protector therefrom were justified by his high-handed action with regard to a prisoner he had released, and declared that the real danger to the body politic was Gloucester's negligence in suppressing certain seditious pamphlets in London provoked by a recent regulation of wages.³ Thus Beaufort took his stand on conciliar government and the anti-labour policy of the Appellants of the past, Gloucester on personal government and a sympathetic attitude towards the wage earners, such as had characterised Richard II and perhaps Henry V. But it was no question of principle but a personal struggle which was at stake, and this was appeased, though by no means finally settled, by a formal reconciliation, Beaufort declaring that he had no designs on the "person honour and estate" of his rival, and Gloucester accepting a declaration of

¹ Hist MSS Rep v., Appendix, p 213

² Ordinances, iii 181-187. Cf. Fabyan, 596.

³ *Chronicles of London*, 78-87.

loyalty made by the Bishop¹ It was a victory for Gloucester. Not only did the Chancellor and Treasurer both resign, being succeeded by Kemp, Bishop of London, and Lord Hungerford respectively, but Beaufort had been driven from his rôle of accuser and put upon his defence. Still there remained much "prive wrath,"² and the Government still showed traces of Beaufort influence by its refusal to delay the collection of tonnage and poundage, though the conditions on which it had been voted had not been observed, an allusion doubtless to the way the restrictions placed on foreign merchants had been evaded.³ The Council indeed was as anxious as ever to assert its despotic power. The magnates summoned Bedford to the Council Chamber, and by the mouth of the new Chancellor, Kemp, just promoted from London to the Archbishopric of York, delivered an allocution which embodied their theory of government. They declared that the responsibility for the good governance of the kingdom lay with the Lords Spiritual and Temporal assembled in Parliament, or when it was not sitting with the Council, except in so far as Parliament had given definite and special powers to the Protector. This being the case, they could not do their duty unless they were "free to governe by the said auctorite and aquite hem in al thing that hem thought expedient for the Kings behove and the good publique," and they therefore demanded a promise from the Protector to abide by the terms of his office. Bedford at once agreed to be "advised, demened and reuled" by the Council in all things, and as Gloucester was confined to the house by illness, the Lords waited on him next day, told him plainly of their suspicions, and extracted from him also a promise to be "corrected and governed by them . . . and not by his owne wit ne ymaginacion".⁴ It may be that both brothers yielded to necessity, as it is hardly conceivable that Bedford should have thus willingly abrogated royal power, and bowed to the arrogant claims of the Lords of the Council, whose predominance was to bring not "good governance" but civil war.

When Bedford set sail for France on March 19th, 1427, he had done nothing to ensure peace at home. Though he removed one cause of offence by inducing Beaufort to go away on pilgrimage,

¹ *Chronicles of London*, 88-94, Rot. Parl., iv. 298-299.

² *Eng. Chron.*, 54.

³ Rot. Parl., iv. 301. Cf. Gregory, 157.

⁴ *Ordinances*, iii. 231-242, Rot. Parl., v. 409-411.

he made the fatal mistake of allowing him to soothe his offended dignity by accepting the Cardinal's hat denied him by Henry V, a proceeding which was to intensify internal dissensions. During Bedford's absence his brother's main energies were absorbed in his struggle with the Council. When Parliament met in October, 1427, he was reminded of his subordinate position by seeing the little King brought in to open the session,¹ which provoked him to insist upon a new definition of his powers. Without hesitation the Lords told him that the title of Protector had been "devised" for him as a sop to his dignity, and was not meant to "emporte auctorite of governaunce of the land," but merely to carry with it a personal duty to provide for the defence of the country. In Parliament he was merely Duke of Gloucester, and with that he must be content.² Blunt to the verge of rudeness, this reply is added evidence of the advance of constitutional theory, and of the fact that opposition to Gloucester was not dictated merely by Beaufort jealousy, but was aimed against any extra-conciliar power. Unfortunately Council rule meant no rule, for its members lacked both patriotism and efficiency. Within a few months of this high-sounding manifesto two members of the Council were on the verge of a private war over some petty retainer's quarrel, and refused to acknowledge the Protector's authority when he intervened.³ The Council's only policy was the glorification of its own power.

The attitude of the Lords for once received the support of public opinion, owing to Duke Humphrey's private failings. Even Gloucester's fast friends the Londoners were murmuring at the way he had deserted his wife, Jacqueline, who had bombarded him, the Council, and even the London authorities, with appeals for help.⁴ Early in 1428 a Papal Bull declared the marriage of Humphrey and Jacqueline invalid, whereupon the former forthwith proceeded to marry his mistress Eleanor Cobham, to the great scandal of Englishmen. The Mayor and Aldermen of London appeared in Parliament to declare that help ought to be sent to Jacqueline and that they were ready to bear their part. Less official, but more significant, was the action of the London women who proceeded to Westminster, led by a fish-seller of the recently

¹ Rot. Parl., iv. 316

² *Ibid.*, 326-327.

³ *St. Albans' Chron.*, 25.

⁴ *Cartulaire des Comtes de Hainaut*, iv 579-582, 590-593, 598 601, 614, Monstrelet, iv 234-239, Cal. of Letter Book K, 68.

established Stocks Market, and complained to the Lords in person of the way Gloucester was neglecting his wife for another "to the ruin of himself, the kingdom, and the marital bond"¹

Gloucester's unpopularity was only short-lived, and his rival, Beaufort, found much opposition awaiting him when in September, 1428, he returned to England. Men noticed that amid the throng of clergy and laity who welcomed the Cardinal to London only one Bishop was to be found, a sign of the anger of the prelates at the recent Papal attack on Archbishop Chichele, in which Beaufort was suspected of complicity. Martin V had bidden the Archbishop conduct a campaign against the "execrable statutes" of Provisors and Praemunire. That this was a political move is obvious from Chichele's reply that both he and Gloucester had been maligned to the Pope, and that he would like to explain in person how a faction was trying to drive him from his see. When Martin suspended Chichele from his office of legate, letters of protest poured in upon him, his nuncio was arrested, and the whole nation rallied to the defence of the anti-papal statutes.² The Commons in 1428 refused Chichele's half-hearted request that the statutes might be repealed, and after an embassy had been sent to Rome, no more was heard of the matter. Still Beaufort's complicity in this attack on Church and nation was shrewdly suspected, more particularly as he had been appointed Papal Legate for the war against the Hussites, so that his publication of his commission after landing in England called forth an official protest. This explains Gloucester's partial success in raising the question whether his rival had not automatically vacated his bishopric by accepting the cardinalate, as also the way Convocation ignored the request for money to support the crusade. Permission, however, was given the Cardinal to raise forces and to undertake a journey to Scotland for the purpose, but when the men were collected at Barham Down near Canterbury, Bedford's necessities in France compelled the Council to induce Beaufort to lead them thither.³

Bedford was not only clamouring for reinforcements, but desired that the King should be sent over to be crowned, as a counter-

¹ *St Albans' Chron.*, 20.

² See the correspondence in Wilkins, *Concilia*, iii. 471-486; Raynaldus, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, ix. 42-44, *Papal Letters*, vii. 36, Cotton MS. Claudius, D. 1, f. 1.

³ Cal of Letter Book K, 99, Ordinances, iii. 339-344.

blast to the rising hopes of the French. It was necessary that the English coronation should first take place, and accordingly Henry was crowned in Westminster Abbey on November 6th, 1429, amidst much enthusiasm¹. In a sense the coronation was a victory for the Cardinal, who had returned to take part in the ceremony. The Council showed him favour,² and he was able to rejoice at the ending of the Protectorate, as the King now nominally ruled³. He was even able to persuade Parliament that money was needed for the war⁴. At the same time the Council strengthened its hold over the Government by reissuing and expanding the rules for its regulation framed in 1423, and its domination over Parliament was secured more firmly in 1430, by restricting the county franchise to those residents who possessed a freehold of forty shillings a year. This legislation was avowedly meant to exclude the "attendance of people of small substance and no value, whereof every of them pretended a voice equivalent as to such elections with the most worthy knights and squires resident,"⁵ in other words, so far as the county representatives were concerned, Parliament was to be under the thumb of the landed gentry, especially that narrow clique which the Council represented. It was, perhaps, a natural corollary that this very Parliament showed its hostility to labour by making the last Statute of Labourers perpetual. While the Council was devoting its whole attention to political ends, riot and disorder were spreading. Brigandage was rife in Essex and Cambridge, in the latter place the schools had been burnt down.⁶ The great Lords were complicating the situation by private quarrels; and when a special Council was appointed to accompany the King to France, oaths had to be extracted from three of its members, the Duke of Norfolk and the Earls of Huntingdon and Warwick, that they would not attack each other while abroad, but allow the Council as a body to decide their disputes⁷. Small wonder then that the Council proved inefficient as a governing body! When Henry VI. crossed to Calais on April 23rd, 1430, he left behind

¹ So great was the crowd that some persons were crushed to death, and pick-pockets reaped a rich harvest (*St Albans' Chron.*, 44).

² Rot. Parl., iv. 338.

³ *Ibid.*, iv. 336-337; Foedera, x. 436

⁴ Rot. Parl., iv. 337.

⁵ Statutes, ii. 243, Rot. Parl., iv. 350.

⁶ Rot. Parl., iv. 345-346, 349-358; Statutes, ii. 246, 258 259. Cf. *St Albans' Chron.*, 45

⁷ Rot. Parl., v. 415.

him a country which carried civil war, the child of decadence and disorder, within her womb

Henry VI's kingdom of France was a totally illusory possession when he reached it in 1430. Bedford had had a hard task from the beginning. When Charles VI had followed his son-in-law and accepted heir to the grave within a few weeks in 1422, the English had lost an ally, who, imbecile though he was, must command the allegiance of most Frenchmen. The Dauphin from being the head of a faction had suddenly sprung into the position of rightful King of France. The English, it is true, commanded a triangular piece of territory, with the coast from the Somme to Brittany as its base, and Paris as its apex, a wedge driven into the heart of France. But this did not really express the circumstances. Paris was so threatened that it sent urgent requests for help to England, and, as Bedford said later, on Paris depended the tenure of France.¹ The country generally was in a shocking condition. When Bedford, Burgundy, and Brittany met at Amiens in 1423, they agreed that the sufferings and privations of the poor were terrible,² freebooters were harassing the country, crimes of horrible atrocity were daily occurrences, prisoners of no value were butchered or thrust into dungeons where they starved to death. Men of position for greed of gold, poor peasants to escape starvation, joined in the unholy game, and the lust of cruelty possessed the land. The soil was uncultivated save near the towns, where men and beasts alike seemed to work with one ear open for the bell which announced the advent of marauders. Bedford did his best. He earned the reputation of an administrator of a high order by reforming the currency, and by encouraging the trade and the industries of the districts which he governed.³ He tried to check the bribery and intimidation which disgraced the administration of justice, while he gave protection to the University of Paris and founded a similar institution at Caen.⁴ It was a sad fate that drove this able administrator to waste his energies on a hopeless task, when England needed so sorely a man of his calibre.

Efficient administration, however, could not secure English domination, which rested solely on the Burgundian alliance, an

¹ *Foedera*, x. 432.

² *Ibid.*, 281.

³ *Ordonnances des Rois de France*, xiii. 28-32, 36-40, 52-84.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 169-171, 176-177.

alliance never whole-hearted on Duke Philip's side,¹ and weakened considerably by the interference of Gloucester in Hainault. Even when agreeing to marry his sister to Bedford, he had in his mind the possibility of a return to his rightful allegiance, and he declined to become a member of the Order of the Garter because of the rule that forbade members to bear arms against each other. When he learnt that Gloucester was determined to follow up his claim, he flew into an ungovernable passion, telling Bedford he would support Humphrey's foes with all his forces. With a sad heart Bedford bore with the angry Duke, trying to distract his mind with a round of dancing and jousting, and making Paris very gay in his efforts to bolster up the alliance. Nevertheless, Burgundy called on his vassals in Picardy and Artois to arm for the defence of Hainault,² and began significant, if fruitless, negotiations with Charles VII. Bad blood had been excited, and could not be abated, especially as many English lords were getting tired of Burgundy's shifty ways, notably the Earl of Salisbury, who was burning to avenge the improper advances made by the Duke to his wife. So Bedford's task was no sinecure, but it was complicated still more by the quarrels which troubled political life at home, and more than once he was sent away from France at a critical moment to settle English differences.

From the military point of view the operations in France consisted of skirmishes and encounters of minor importance, punctuated by a few outstanding events, the first of which occurred in 1423, when Charles concentrated his forces on the town of Cravant on the Yonne. Forced to abandon the town and confine their energies to the citadel, the garrison was hard pressed and short of food, when a combined English and Burgundian force, under the command of the Earls of Salisbury and Suffolk, arrived to relieve it. Finding a frontal attack impossible, Salisbury led his men across the Yonne, and thus faced the enemy across the river. After three hours' delay, he began under cover of the archers to force the passage of the river across a ford, while another detachment, under Lord Willoughby, rushed a bridge on the right, and the garrison sallied out to take the French in the rear. Many of the enemy's Gascon, Spanish, and Lombard mercenaries fled, though the Scots, ever the backbone of

¹ Chastellain, II. 12.

² Stowe MS. 568, f. 32^{ro}; Monstrelet, IV. 212; Waurin, III. 136.

the French army, offered a stout resistance, and only retired after many of them had fallen and their commander had been captured.¹ Suffolk followed up the victory with further successes in the East, counteracted, however, by a reverse in the West sustained by Sir John de la Pole while returning from a plundering raid into Anjou. The very fact that the systematic campaigning of Henry V. was giving place to the foray was indicative of the change in the manner of warfare, and the consequent loss to the English of moral prestige. Still, they managed to hold their own and a little more, being reinforced in the summer of 1424 from England to the extent of some 1600 men and 3500 re-mounts, while with discreditable breach of faith the Earl of Douglas crossed to assist the French.² In August Bedford went to strengthen the hands of the besiegers of Ivry, to find the enemy in force at Verneuil. On the 17th the two armies joined issue outside this little town, both fighting on foot, the English in their accustomed array with the archers drawn up on the wing. Victory hung in the balance till a body of archers, who had repulsed a French attack on the English baggage in the rear, came up and turned the day in favour of their side. Bedford estimated that 7262 of the French lay dead upon the field,³ and "the moste vengeance fell upon the proude Scottes, for they went to Dog-wash the same day, mo than 1700 (*sic*) of cote Armoures of these proude Scottes".⁴ Indeed it was the death-blow to Scottish interference in France, to the intense delight of the French, who had come to hate their arrogant allies.⁵ It was the most fiercely contested battle of the war, more so than Agincourt or Crevant thought Waurin, who had been an eye-witness of all three engagements.⁶ It had, moreover, some effect on the war in the immediate future. The Anglo-Burgundian armies pressed steadily forward, Maine was reduced, and Salisbury opened up the country beyond Paris, but Burgundy's attention was diverted to resisting Gloucester in Hainault, and during the course of 1425 Bedford was obliged to return to England to settle the quarrel of Beaufort and Gloucester, just when Charles VII. had been induced to drive the

¹ July 31st, 1423, Waurin, iii. 57-69, St. Remy, ii. 76-79, Monstrelet, iv. 157-162, Cousinot, *Pucelle*, 186-187

² He had promised to assist the English (*Foedera*, x. 123-124).

³ Letter to John of Luxemburg in Beaucourt, ii. 16, n. 3

⁴ *Brut*, 441.

⁵ Basin, i. 52-53.

⁶ Waurin, iii. 109.

ill-famed advisers of his youth from Court, and had come to terms with England's recent ally the Duke of Brittany.¹

Still the tide had not yet turned, and before long the shuffling Duke of Brittany believed it wise once more to acknowledge Henry as King of France,² in the belief that the English were about to penetrate beyond the Loire. The English forces were slowly concentrating on Orleans, that town which Henry V. during his last campaign had passed wistfully by. It was probably Salisbury who devised the scheme: at any rate he returned to England in July, 1427,³ to obtain reinforcements, and Bedford, now back in France, disclaimed all responsibility for the venture "takyn in hand God knoweth by what avys".⁴ The difficulties which beset the project were made manifest by the failure of Warwick and Suffolk to reduce Montargis,⁵ but Salisbury, in England, induced Parliament to vote money on a slightly more liberal scale, and to guarantee a loan for immediate purposes. In June he crossed from Sandwich to France with a force of 450 lances and 2250 archers, not to mention a considerable train of artillery, on which a thousand marks had been expended. The Earl made his way direct to Orleans,⁶ taking over forty towns and fortresses on his way, "somme wonne be assault and somme other wyse,"⁷ and by October 12th he sat down to besiege it on the south side across the river. As his forces were too few to blockade the town, he concentrated his attack on the "Tournelles," two strong towers guarding the southern end of the bridge which spanned the river. Though the assault failed, mining did its work, but no sooner were the Tournelles taken, than a stray shot gave Salisbury his death wound, and at the same time the successful entry of a relieving force helped to revive the spirits of the French. For a time all the besiegers, save those who held the Tournelles, retired, and the command devolved on Suffolk, who determined to carry out a blockade, not in the systematic way that Henry V. had adopted, but by placing "bastides," or palisaded earthworks, at intervals round the town. The blockade was never

¹ See Beaucourt, II. cap. II.

² September 8th, 1427, Lobineau, *Hist. de Bretagne*, Preuves II. 1004-1005.

³ Ordinances, III. 274.

⁴ *Ibid.*, IV. 223.

⁵ Waurin, III. 216-221, J. Chartier, I. 54-55, Cousinot, *Pucelle*, 213-216, Bourgeois, 249

⁶ Gregory, 162.

⁷ Letter of Salisbury, Delpit, Documents, 236-237.

really effective. Orleans was never short of provisions, or cut off from communication with the outer world, both siege and defence being carried on in a leisurely fashion, with very little fighting and much exchange of courtesy. One fight of slight importance there was, when the French tried to intercept an English convoy under Sir John Fastolf, which was bringing Lenten fare to the besiegers in February, 1429. The impetuosity of the Scots gave the victory to the English, but the "Battle of the Herrings," as it was called, did little to improve the English position. Men were deserting in large numbers, and by the following April the English Council were considering Bedford's urgent demand for reinforcements to the extent of 200 lances and 1200 archers, but could not promise more than half that number.¹

It was at this juncture that a new personality appeared on the French side Charles VII., distraught amid many unprincipled counsellors, was to the outward eye a despicable weakling, unworthy of the position which he claimed, but to him came a simple country maiden from the frontiers of Lorraine, who believed that she had a Divine mission to deliver him from his troubles, and take him to be crowned at Reims. To the English historian it matters not whether Jeanne d'Arc was a saint sent from God or an inspired maniac, whether she was the tool of priests or one guided by an inner light. That she was directly or indirectly the product of a wave of religious revival and patriotism in France there is no doubt. Revivalist preachers, such as the Carmelite Thomas in Flanders and Artois, and the Franciscan Richard in Paris, were rousing men and women to repentance and to burn their "vanities" as the Florentines did later at the bidding of Savonarola.² That Jeanne came from the people was not the least of her attributes, as it rallied the nation as a whole to the call of patriotism. By April, 1429, having won the confidence of Charles, she had been dispatched with an escort to relieve Orleans. Already this mailed maiden with her white banner had struck the imagination of her compatriots. When she entered Orleans, crowds turned out to welcome her, "making such joy as if they saw God descend among them . . . they were comforted as if the siege were already raised, thanks to the Divine virtue which dwelt, as they had been told, in the simple maid"³. Though the

¹ Ordinances, iii. 322-323, 324. ² Monstrelet, iv. 302-306; Bourgeois, 252-253.

³ *Journal du Siège in Procès*, iv. 153, Cousinot, *Pucelle*, 246, 248-249.

French leaders were naturally dubious as to the wisdom of giving military authority to an illiterate girl, the rank and file accepted her as a heaven-sent leader, and the English were struck with fear at this witch, whom even wounds could not subdue. Yet the English fought bravely and well, though it was no longer true that 200 of them could put to flight a force four or five times larger.¹ The English bastides were attacked in turn, some were captured, the Tournelles yielded to a concentrated assault, the bridge head was lost, and on May 9th, 1429, the siege was raised. Worse was to follow. After a short pause the French began to clear the valley of the Loire of the various detachments into which the besieging army had been split. Jargeau fell, and an attempt to relieve Beaugency by Talbot and Sir John Fastolf resulted in their defeat at Patay, thanks to the archers being taken unawares by the French cavalry. The indomitable Maid insisted on a continued advance, the "Voices" to which she looked for inspiration urged her forward. Despite opposition, she dragged the unheroic Charles in her wake, and having captured Troyes, opened up the way to Reims, where on July 17th she fulfilled her promise of having her sovereign crowned.

Bedford was not slow to realise the gravity of the situation. As he wrote some few years later, "There felle by the hand of God, as it semeth, a greet stroke upon youre peopple that was assembled there (at Orleans) in greete nombre, caused in greete partie, as I trowe, of lak of sad beleve and of unlieful doubte that thei had of a disciple and leme of the fende called the Pucelle, that used fals enchantements and sorcerie, the whiche stroke and discomfiture not oonly lessed in greet partie the nombrie of youre peopple ther, but as wel withdrawe the courage of the remnant in marvaillous wise, and courage your adverse partie and enemyes".² All Englishmen believed that Jeanne was a "ffalse witche,"³ indeed her dramatic appearance, her success, and her own assertions all pointed to the supernatural, which to men who suffered as a result must mean the Devil. Perhaps Bedford was genuinely shocked at this alliance of his foes with the powers of darkness, but his taunting letter addressed about this time to Charles, in which he called on him to abandon his pretensions, and accused him of deceiving superstitious people by

¹ *Procès*, iii. 7-8

² *Ordinances*, iv. 223; *Foedera*, x. 408

³ *Chron. of London*, 133

availing himself of the services of a dissolute woman, must be regarded as bluff, meant only to restore the failing courage of his men. Ever since the end of May he had been trying to collect all the soldiers scattered over the country;¹ in July he received reinforcements from England in the form of 250 lances and 2500 archers which Cardinal Beaufort had diverted from the Hussite crusade owing to "the greet and grievous adversitees and fortunes of werre," but still he was compelled to cut down the garrisons of many places to provide an efficient fighting force, and this when Rouen was garrisoned with only seventy-five men and such places as Evreux by only twelve.² The Duke of Burgundy's attitude was also a cause for anxiety. His representatives visited Charles VII. with congratulations and suggestions for a truce, yet during July he met Bedford in Paris, where he undertook to raise troops to assist him, and was tactfully reminded of the past by a public rehearsal of the scene at the Bridge of Montereau.³ Still Jeanne hoped to detach the Duke from his traitorous alliance, but she was helpless in view of the intrigues which did duty for diplomacy among the followers of Charles and the Burgundians. Intrigue and counter-intrigue followed one another in bewildering confusion, and though an armistice of a kind was agreed to between the two French parties in August, its terms provided that while Charles might attack Paris, Burgundy might lend men to help the English to defend it. The Maid was sickening of her task, desiring to return home and tend her father's sheep, while the bewildered Bedford was preparing to resist the threatened attack on Paris, and urging the Government at home to send further reinforcements, which duly arrived under the leadership of Sir John Radcliffe. The attack, led by the Maid in person on September 8th, failed partly through lack of support, she was wounded, and despite her protests Charles decided to disband his army. "Thus were broken the will of the Maid and the army of the King."⁴

In spite of the withdrawal of the French, Bedford's position was most insecure. On October 13th, 1429, he set the seal to the wonderful year, which had seen the total reverse of English prospects in France, by abandoning the regency of all his little nephew's con-

¹ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, ii. 95-100. ² See *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, viii. 770.

³ Bourgeois, 255; Waurin, iii. 307-309, Foedera, x. 432.

⁴ *De Cagny in Procès*, iv. 27-29.

tinental dominions, save only the Norman Duchy, to his uncertain ally, the Duke of Burgundy. With a sad heart he left Paris for Rouen. The French pressed forward, the English vainly trying to regain lost ground, and not much helped by the arrival of King Henry with more reinforcements in the spring of 1430. It was hard to find soldiers in England. The Council had tried to get all holders of Norman fiefs to go over and defend them, but no one was anxious to face the "Pucelle de Dieu," and military service was shirked by all and every.¹ But the capture of the Maid on May 23rd by the Burgundian forces besieging Compiègne gave great joy to her enemies. The soldiers cheered the event to the echo, and Burgundy assured his friends that the great imposture was over.² At once a change came over the aspect of affairs. The English recaptured certain lost fortresses, and by August they were once more in command of Paris, the government of which Burgundy had abandoned. Meanwhile her captors were preparing to make an example of Jeanne. The English had promised her a fiery death from the first; the Burgundians were even more bitter enemies, her erstwhile friends, including the King she had brought out of obscurity to be crowned at Reims, did not lift a finger to help her, though the life of Talbot, who had been captured at Patay, could have been placed in the scale against hers with immediate effect. Some supported the Archbishop of Embrun, who wrote to Charles "for the recovery of this girl and for the ransome of her life I bid you spare neither means nor money, howsoever great the price unless you would incur the indelible shame of the most disgraceful ingratititude". More were ready to agree with the Archbishop of Reims that Jeanne had herself courted disaster by her self-will. Moreover, was there not at hand a shepherd boy ready to take up her part as the divinely appointed saviour of France?³ The Vicar-general of the Inquisition in France demanded that she should be surrendered to him as a disseminator of errors, the Bishop of Beauvais claimed that as she had been captured within the confines of his diocese—a matter by no means certain—she should be surrendered to him, and supported by the University of Paris and a bribe of 10,000 francs, he secured her sale to the English. Brought to trial at Rouen, she was submitted to

¹ Ordinances, iii. 349-351, Foedera, x. 459-460.

² Waurin, iii. 358-359; Procès, v. 167.

³ Procès, v. 168-170.

severe cross-examination about the "Voices," which had guided her, and the Divine mission which she claimed. With the exception of Cardinal Beaufort, no Englishman took a prominent part in the trial, but it was obviously guided by English influence. Having forced the Maid into a recantation of her Divine mission, her judges condemned her to death, and on May 30th she was burnt in the market-place of the Norman capital. The English point of view was explicable, the ecclesiastics were inspired by theological bias, but those who cannot be excused are her own countrymen of both parties, who hated her as a representative of popular patriotism which was spoiling the game of the politicians, who had everything to gain and nothing to lose by the divisions of France.¹

The execution of Jeanne d'Arc and the capture of Louviers made it possible to crown Henry King of France. He had spent an idle three months at Calais, whence he had been taken to Rouen for the trial of the Maid. On December 16th he was hallowed in the Cathedral of Notre Dame by Cardinal Beaufort. Some attempt was made to celebrate the event with due pomp and solemnity, but the Paris mob turned the coronation banquet into an unseemly scramble, in which high and low fought with one another for food.² Money was still sorely needed; London had to be asked for a loan of 10,000 marks, which would be of greater service in the present pressing necessity than double the amount at a less critical time,³ and it was still found necessary to put up preachers to undermine the popularity of the Maid. Moreover, Burgundy, by no means satisfied with the support he was receiving from his allies, signed a truce for two years with Charles VII in September, 1431, extending it by four more years in the following December. It was therefore not surprising that the English did less than hold their own during the year 1432. Though a French attempt on Rouen failed, the very fact that an attempt was possible, and nearly successful, showed how the English power was declining, and the fall of Chartres, whence Paris drew her supplies, emphasised it. The French capital was in a piteous state, provisions were perennially

¹ For recent opinions on Jeanne d'Arc, see M. Anatole France, *Vie de Jeanne d'Arc*, and Mr. Lang's *The Maid of France*. Cf. M. Hanoteau, *Jeanne d'Arc* (Paris, 1911), and for another point of view, M. Raphael Symptor, *Jeanne d'Arc n'a Jamais Existé*.

² *St Albans' Chron.*, 50, 52, Cochon, 408-409. ³ *Cal. of Letter Book K*, 116.

short, and empty houses, of which there were many, were being pulled down to be used as firewood¹

Under the circumstances the English were ready to treat for peace, with the assistance of the Pope's representative the Cardinal of Santa Croce, but prolonged negotiations, and the bringing of certain French prisoners and lords of the English Council from England to Calais ended in smoke. Meanwhile, the Burgundian alliance was wearing very thin. Bedford, having lost his wife Anne in November, married Jacquetta, sister of the Count of St Pol and niece of John of Luxembourg, Burgundy's chief captain. So obvious was it that this marriage was intended to strengthen English power within the sphere of Burgundian influence, that the Duke made no attempt to conceal his anger, though anxiety caused by French successes led him to take an active part against Charles later in the year. In the summer of 1433 a Burgundian envoy, Hugh de Lannoy, was in England, and his reports help us to realise how Englishmen, too, were wearying of their ally's double dealing. Cardinal Beaufort was gracious, "but truly we did first find him somewhat more distant than formerly". Warwick received him courteously, but "a little more gravely than he had done before". Bedford, who crossed to England just at this time, was more diplomatic, expressing himself much grieved at the ill-feeling that had arisen between himself and the Duke. With regard to English policy the envoy reported, that "from what we have been able to learn . . . they exert themselves either to make peace with the Dauphin upon whatever terms they can obtain it, or to find money to raise a very large and powerful army. For from what we can perceive, they very well know that the affairs of France cannot long continue in the state in which they are now." There was much talk of arranging a marriage between Henry VI. and a daughter of Charles VII., and of releasing the Duke of Orleans that he might bring about a peace. Burgundy was therefore very anxious to find out what the feelings of this prince were towards him, a subject on which his envoy reassured him.² The real position of affairs was dawning on Englishmen. As Burgundy bluntly put it, there must be either peace or a far more vigorous prosecution of the war,³ and yet already there were 9700 soldiers in

¹ *Ordonnances des Rois de France*, xiii 174-175.

² Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, ii 218-249.

³ *Ibid.* 250.

various parts of France,¹ and it was manifestly impossible for English resources to do more. The war had become a canker eating into the heart of England, at a time when matters were not going at all smoothly at home. Quarrels, dissensions, and violence were the order of the day. England was paying dearly for the triumphs of Henry V.

While Henry had been abroad, a mild sensation had been caused by a certain William Perkyns, alias William Maundvyll, who for the purposes of the agitation which he organised called himself "Jack Sharpe of Wygmoreland". Dragging out the Lollard disendowment scheme from oblivion, he advertised it so successfully that the regent hurried down to Abingdon, where the malcontents were said to be assembled, but the whole movement collapsed with the execution of the ringleader. Still the mention of "Wygmoreland" savoured of the House of Mortimer, and showed that the days of a possible alliance of dynastic and religious rebels were not past. Heresy, though not powerful, was still fairly prevalent. In 1432 the Chancellor in opening Parliament declared how some denied the Faith, despised the Sacraments, and panted for the destruction of the clergy.² Added to this there were signs of growing disorder, of robbery and violence and minor offences against the law of treason.³ The dissensions of Gloucester and Beaufort were still liable to set the country in a blaze at any moment. At his nephew's return Gloucester had secured a change of ministry in favour of his friends, even those in personal attendance on the King being removed, since Henry was being made use of for political ends, now that he was beginning to realise his power and authority, as his tutor Warwick knew.⁴ The struggle between the great lords was being transferred from the Council board to the royal bed-chamber, where petty intrigues obliterated all considerations of national welfare. While he was abroad Beaufort learnt that he had been "strangely demeened"⁵ by being prosecuted under the Statute of Piæmuniæ, and when Parliament met in May, 1432, the declaration made by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal that perfect unanimity existed in their ranks, was at once given the lie by Beaufort's demand to be confronted by those who had accused him

¹ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, ii. 257-258

² Rot. Parl., iv. 388.

³ St. Albans' *Chron.*, 47-48, Brut, 442, 443.

⁴ Ordinances, iv. 132-137.

⁵ Cal. of Letter Book K, 139.

of treachery. Assured that no such accusation had been made, the Cardinal raised another debate as to the way he had been treated over certain jewels pledged to him by the Crown, and scored a point over his rivals by securing exemption from all liabilities incurred under the Statutes of Provisors and *Præmunire*¹. Lord Cromwell, too, had his grievance for having been dismissed from the office of Chamberlain contrary to the Ordinances of 1429. A spirit of mistrust was abroad, and it spread even to Bedford in France, for he hastened back to the meeting of Parliament in July, 1433, to protest at being accused of treachery and of having caused the English reverses by his neglect. He was doubtless touchy on the subject of the war, perhaps he had heard criticisms of his impolitic marriage with Jacquetta of Luxembourg, and of how after that event he had "playd hym a bought in Pykardy,"² but he was assured that no charge had been levelled against him.³

The country naturally suffered from these constant squabbles, as even the Chancellor allowed in 1432.⁴ Brigandage and oppression were the order of the day, and in 1433 the Commons mustered courage to protest against the way magnates maintained criminals in the Law Courts. Much required to be done to restore order, and a series of bad harvests helped to complicate matters, by driving up the price of corn. Men were grumbling at the "exorbitant extortion and the impoverishing of the inhabitants of the kingdom" through taxation,⁵ and Parliament had already raised its voice in favour of peace, "considering the burdon of the werre, an howe grevous and hevy it is to this lande."⁶ The Commons realised the seriousness of the situation. Bedford's return had been marked by another change of ministry, and the return of Cromwell to office as Treasurer, and such peace resulted from his interference that the Commons begged him to remain in England. He was the only person who could be trusted to govern without prejudice, and at the same time he saw quite clearly that the power of the Council was at the root of England's woes, for while agreeing to remain at home, he made stipulations as to its composition and the tenure of its members.⁷ His next step was to examine the finances of the kingdom. The Treasurer estimated the net revenue for the year at

¹ Rot. Parl., iv. 389-392.

² *Chron. of London*, 135.

³ Rot. Parl., iv. 420

⁴ *Ibid.*, 388.

⁵ *St Albans' Chron.*, 58.

⁶ Rot. Parl., iv. 371

⁷ *Ibid.*, 423-424.

about £42,000, and some £8000 or £9000 had still to come in, but the estimated expenditure was over £53,000, exclusive of any operations in France, and there were debts to the extent of £164,000. The Commons showed no inclination to vote money, instead they deducted £4000 from the subsidy they voted for the relief of poor districts, among which certain wards of London were to be found.¹ Bedford did his best by sacrificing a large portion of his salary, and inducing other Councillors to do likewise, and Cromwell obtained the appointment of a sort of financial committee to check the accounts and to arrange for the redemption of the debt. But though Bedford's stay in England did much, he could not keep his eyes from straying to France, where his life's work seemed likely to be utterly undone; he could not resist the appeal of the letters sent by the Provost and Commune of Paris, saying that unless help came the city would be lost, and as a contemporary versifier put it, with it the whole of France.²

When Bedford left England in July, 1434, the war was a hopeless venture by his own reckoning, though surrender was evidently far from his thoughts, despite the negotiations for peace which were being renewed. The days of serious campaigning were over, and the chief problem that Bedford had to face was the exasperation of the peasants, who, rendered desperate by the licentious soldiery of both parties, now rose in Normandy, devastating the country, and exacting terrible vengeance for their wrongs.³ These risings and the coming defection of Burgundy were to provide a final blow. In January, 1435, Philip le Bon met the Duke of Bourbon and other prominent supporters of Charles VII at Nevers, where no one could have told by their manner that they had ever waged war on one another. Arrangements were made for a great conference at Arras in July, to which the English should be invited to send representatives, and it was made abundantly clear that if terms were not there arranged, Burgundy would desert his allies and return to his allegiance at a price. To Burgundy's invitation to send envoys to Arras the English were obliged to agree,⁴ though there was a feeling in Europe that their attitude would hardly be

¹ Rot. Parl., iv. 425-426, Cal. of Letter Book K, 177.

² Cal. of Letter Book K, 132-133, 135, Delpit, Documents, 248-250.

³ Basin, i. 56-59, 103-109, J. Chartier, i. 172-173.

⁴ Cal. of Letter Book K, 189, Foedera, x. 610-616, Waurin, iv. 57-58.

conciliatory, and the Pope wrote to Henry urging a better disposition towards peace than he had shown hitherto.¹ All through July numerous cavalcades made their way down the roads to Arras, and by the end of the month a crowd of notables from far and near, including representatives of the Pope, the Council sitting at Basel, and many of the states of Europe, besides the envoys of the three interested parties, had gathered within the walls.² When the conference began, the French took their stand on the relations of parties before Henry V.'s invasion, offering Guienne and certain neighbouring territories and a sum of 600,000 crowns, but later they extended this to include Normandy, held as a duchy and not in full sovereignty. The English were instructed to offer a partition of France, with all north of the Loire ceded in full sovereignty to King Henry, or as a last resort a confirmation of the existing relations of both parties, without any question of renunciations. Matters were thus at a deadlock when Cardinal Beaufort appeared on August 23rd,³ but his intervention bore no fruit. On September 6th the English envoys left Arras, though the French drew up a fresh offer of terms to be sent after them. English statesmen, however, had not yet tasted the dregs of that cup of humiliation which Henry V had prepared for them, they would not agree to the renunciation of the French Crown, which they regarded as an acknowledgment that "all these werres and conquest hathe be but usurpcion and triannie".⁴ They therefore rejected with insult this last offer when it was presented in London,⁵ and left the way open for the formal reconciliation of the Armagnac and Burgundian factions, which immediately took place at Arras.

Before this had become an accomplished fact Bedford had died, on September 15th, 1435. Of all the men to whom Henry V. had confided his son his brother John alone was fully worthy of the trust. He had fought an uphill and impossible fight in France with as much success as could be expected, at his death the one steady influence in English politics disappeared, and the party strife which had been the curse of England for the last thirteen years pursued its way unhindered.

¹ Foedera, x 620

² St. Remy, ii. 305-325; Waurin, iv 69-81.

³ Waurin, iv 81.

⁴ Memorandum in Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, ii. 576.

⁵ Ibid., i. 56-64, St. Remy, ii. 361-364

CHAPTER XXII

PARTY POLITICS AND THE END OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR
(1435-1458)

WITH the death of Bedford a change came over the situation of affairs in England. Hitherto the war in France had been carried on by the regent with small reference to the authorities at home, and largely by the aid of French taxes; questions of foreign policy had not till quite lately made their way into the mutual disagreements of party politicians. Now circumstances compelled the Lords of the Council to realise that the nation was at war. It was freely reported that both Burgundy and France had played false at Arias, and England rang with curses at that "foundour of new falsehede, distrubare of pees, capteine of cowardise," who had deserted her in her need.¹ The Londoners, ever anxious to attack the foreigner, threw themselves on the houses of the Flemish subjects of the Duke resident in the city, and the Government had to intervene to protect those Flemings who had not been led astray by "the wiles of the so-called Duke of Burgundy and Count of Flanders."² This being the temper of the nation, it is not surprising that envoys sent by Burgundy to announce his reconciliation with Charles VII, and to suggest that this need not mean any breach with his late ally, were denied the usual courtesies. Both Beaufort and Gloucester were insistent that no peace should be made with Burgundy. The Treasurer pointed out the insulting omission of the title "souverain seigneur" in addressing the King, and when Parliament met in October the Chancellor made a violent attack on Burgundian perfidy. Though we are told that this "parliament was ordeyned for the governance of Fraunce,"³ the subsidy voted was allocated to the defence of England. More money was provided by an entirely

¹ Political Songs (Rolls Series), II. 148-149.

² Cal. or Letter Book K., 204.

³ Chrons. of London, 139.

new form of tax levied on income derived from land, rents, annuities, and offices, which was graduated from sixpence in the pound on incomes between £5 and £100, to two shillings in the pound on incomes over £400¹. It is evident that more and more the Commons were attempting to find new sources of taxation. They had done something towards it in 1427, but this carried things much further, and the returns of special commissions appointed to hold inquest on the value of land provide evidence of considerable interest as to the economic position of the nation.² For the war Parliament was induced to sanction the suicidal policy of large loans to the enormous extent of £100,000, though no one was to be compelled to lend

Still no military enterprise of any value could be undertaken, and there existed no captain of approved ability to guide the operations since Aundel's death in the previous June. Gloucester, a good general within limits, was made captain of Calais, but the chief command in France was given to an untied man of twenty-four in the person of Richard Duke of York, the heir of the Mortimer claims. Before his death Bedford had become aware that the most that could be expected was to save Normandy, but even Normandy was now in a state of anarchy, the fields lay untilled, the people were desperate, only a speedy succour could save the situation.³ The peasants were ready to rise, the Parisians were getting heartily tired of English rule. In Normandy Fécamp and Harfleur were taken, Arques was burnt, and by April, 1436, Charles VII at last got possession of his capital. The Paris militia had refused to man their walls, and the English garrison, driven into the Bastille, had to capitulate. The English Government took a useless revenge, by trying to stir up the men of Holland against Burgundy and returning a haughty answer to his remonstrance at the treatment of his subjects in England and on the high seas. Driven to take the field in person, Philip worked on the commercial rivalry felt by his subjects against the English to gain support for an attack on Calais, which had been in imminent danger of capture for at least a year,⁴ and once would have been surprised by armed ships which sailed into the harbour in the guise of a fishing fleet, had it not been for the prompt action of the captain of the town.⁵ Early in June

¹ Rot. Parl., iv 486-488. ² *Ibid.*, 486, Cal. of Letter Book K, 71-75, 195-197.

³ *Bekynton Correspondence*, i 289-295.

⁴ Cal. of Letter Book K, 190.

⁵ *Brut*, 572-573.

Burgundy's project was known in London, and preparations for munitions of war for the garrison, and provisions for an army to be mustered under Gloucester were made,¹ in addition to the contingent already supplied to help the Duke of York in France. A force of surprising magnitude was collected and transported to Calais on August 2nd. The town had been invested since July 9th, but the garrison had offered a stout resistance to Burgundy's raw levies, many of whom incontinently fled so soon as the succours appeared. Gloucester therefore had to content himself with a raid in Flanders, during which he did much damage, to the intense delight of his fellow-countrymen, who gave him a great reception when he shortly returned to England.

Such a raid could have no real effect on the course of the war, and while Gloucester was away, an old danger had revived in the growing restlessness of the Scots. The border had never been quiet, and recently the French had been negotiating for a renewal of their old alliance, based on a marriage of the Dauphin with James's daughter Margaret. The Scottish King had been complaining with an air of injured innocence of the behaviour of the border English,² but they in turn could produce an imposing list of grievances, though it was not their fault that the truce was allowed to expire without renewal in May, 1436.³ James chose the moment when all the energies of England were concentrated on Calais to attack Roxburgh, but was easily driven off by the Earl of Northumberland, and his subsequent murder by the discontented Scottish nobles relieved the tension on the English border, and led to a renewal of the truce in 1438. Still England was in a sad state. Even the Chancellor had to confess to Parliament that justice, peace, and a better security for trade must be restored to the people.⁴ The death of the Queen-mother at this juncture revealed the fact that she had been as lawless as any of her son's subjects in contracting an unlicensed marriage with the handsome squire Owen ap Tudor, who thus became the father of three children, one of whom was to beget the future Henry VII. For this indiscretion Owen was arrested, but escaped punishment. Abroad men were growing disgusted with the war. The Duke of York insisted on coming

¹ Cal. of French Rolls, Dep. Keeper's Rep., 48, App. 313

² Ordinances, iv. 350-352 *a*

³ *Ibid.*, 308-315; Rot. Scot., ii. 294.

⁴ Rot. Parl., iv. 495.

home,¹ his subordinates showed a similar desire to abandon their posts, and the old Earl of Warwick was apparently only induced to take his place because his position as King's tutor was untenable, thanks to the intrigues at Court. With Warwick gone, it was thought well to treat the King as fully responsible for his acts, but this lad of sixteen was quite unable to cope with the multitudinous problems which lay before him. It was perhaps a hard thing to say that he was such a simpleton that he had difficulty in distinguishing good from evil,² but his weakness was temperamental, an unfortunate inheritance from his French grandfather. In his infancy the sport of factions, he continued to be so after he had grown up, ever dominated as he was by the person nearest to him at the time, when his great duty to the nation was to hold the balance of parties.

Divisions in the kingdom, stayed for a moment by the universal anger at Burgundy's defection, revived when the leaders of the Beaufort party realised that the high pretensions of the English in France would have to be abated. All through the years 1437 and 1438 they were playing a losing game with a certain dogged courage, the French too wise to provoke a pitched battle, and content to wear down the enemy by steady if not dramatic warfare. Warwick secured a slight success when he first assumed his command, in the relief of Crotoy, but the enemy was now in a sufficiently strong position to invade Guienne and even to lay siege to Bordeaux in 1438. It mattered not that the French had to retire through lack of supplies and artillery, the venture was prophetic of future disaster to the English. The English Government was now very anxious to end the war, but the French refused to be hurried, and declared that they must consult with the Duke of Orleans before taking any definite steps. A conference was, however, held in July, 1439, between Gravelines and Calais. But the terms which the English offered were not liberal enough: starting from a partition of France with both Kings retaining the titular sovereignty, they came down to an offer to accept the Brétigny cessions in full sovereignty, with the addition of Normandy, Maine, and Calais. Even with regard to the surrender of the title of King of France, "rather thanne the thyng falle to rupture, the said ambassadours

¹ Ordinances, v. 6, 7.

² Hardyng, 394.

shal reporte them in this matiere to my lord the Cardinal, to whom the King both opened and declared al his intent in this matiere".¹ This may mean that Beaufort had been instructed to surrender the title as a last resort, but if so, it is strange that he never played this card, but allowed negotiations to break down largely on this point. For the French demanded that Henry should renounce the title of King, do homage for such portions as were ceded to him, and reinstate all those who had been dispossessed of their lands. This last offer was reported to London when the reply came it was found to contain an absolute refusal to abandon the title of King of France, to do homage, or to restore the disinherited, and to this was appended an elaborate justification of this attitude, much on the lines of the memorandum Bedford had dictated at the Arras conference. But the French envoys having already retired, the conference was considered at an end. Its only satisfactory result was the signature of a three years' truce with Flanders, which safeguarded Calais from attack.² Arras had been a disaster, Calais was no less so. It has ever been the boasted quality of Englishmen, that they never know when they are beaten, and this was never truer than at this time. Naturally Gloucester, as the mouthpiece of the war party, declared that he would never agree to the renunciation of the royal title,³ but even Beaufort, fully instructed as he was by the King, had not found the terms in any way possible.

Nevertheless, within four months negotiations were reopened on the basis of the release of the Duke of Orleans. The commissions were sealed on January 30th at Reading, and were the signal for the outburst of party warfare, when Gloucester seized the opportunity to issue a long indictment of Beaufort and his chief henchman, Kemp, Archbishop of York, who had recently been allowed to accept a cardinal's hat. Therein the King was warned that certain persons were imposing on his youth "in derogation of your noble estate". In addition to his past misdeeds Beaufort was said to have encouraged the war to get the Crown jewels into his hands, to have evaded paying the dues of his cathedral church, and by securing grants of land to have impoverished the Crown. He had become wealthy by the sales of offices, and had assumed the pomp and magnificence

¹ Foedera, x 724-728, Ordinances, v 354-362

² Journal of Bekynton in Ordinances, v. 334-407.

³ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, ii. 446.

of royalty, though he neither had nor could have any interest in the Crown. The two Cardinals were governing the country between them, having obtained their position by estranging the King from Gloucester himself, the Duke of York, the Earl of Huntingdon, and the Archbishop of Canterbury. They had spent endless sums at Arras, and all in vain; more recently they had sent envoys to Calais, which resulted in the reconciliation of Burgundy and Orleans, and Kemp, with the connivance of Beaufort, had encouraged the King to renounce all his claims on France. From first to last the foreign policy of the Government had been disastrous, as Beaufort always preferred to use his own friends, despite Gloucester's offers of assistance, and now it was even rumoured that Orleans was to be released.¹ The document betrays a hopeless incapacity to take a broad and statesmanlike view of affairs, but so far as it attacked Beaufort's financial dealings, it is pertinent and has never been answered. Even abroad Beaufort was known as "the rich Cardinal of Winchester,"² though when a ship of his was taken for the service of the nation he described himself as a "poure man".³ Sir John Fortescue was equally struck by this suspicious wealth,⁴ and it seems impossible to explain how the £22,000 spent at Arras was accounted for. But the main point was the proposed release of Orleans, against which Gloucester argued in another public document, because it could only tend to heal factions at the French Court, and to deprive England of a valuable hostage, that too at a moment when the Normans were likely to revolt, when "his Majesties ancient heritage" was left defenceless by the recall of Huntingdon from Guienne, and above all when England had no continental allies save the youthful King of Portugal.⁵ These two indictments were clearly meant as political manifestoes, and to the second the Government thought it wise to issue an answer, which placed the whole responsibility for the policy of release on the King, whose one object was to end the war "that longe hath contyned and endured, that is to saye, an hundred yeeres and more". The reasons for this course are marshalled with

¹ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, II. 440-451.

² Chastellain, II. 51

³ *Letters of Queen Margaret*, 52.

⁴ *Governance of England* (ed. Plummer), 134.

⁵ Foedera, x 764-767.

convincing emphasis. The war was a failure, and the best way to get peace was to release Orleans, for that would remove a desire for the continuance of the war among those controlling the French Government, who only looked on the prolongation of the struggle as a means of keeping Orleans safely out of the way.¹ The true explanation of the English Government's policy is here revealed. Burgundy was trying to build up a league of princes with the object of limiting the power of Charles VII and that of his bourgeois officials, having discovered that Orleans was well disposed towards him, he believed that this prince of the blood might give him much assistance, and the scheme of the Beaufort party was therefore intended to placate Burgundy and renew dissensions within the French kingdom, a plan which would appeal strongly to men who had seen half France won, thanks to the feud of Armagnac and Burgundian.² Even Gloucester, it seems, was ready to acknowledge that peace was necessary, and henceforth the ending of the hundred years' war was to be a growing desire, but parties were to fight over the means to that end. Beaufort and his friends had their way. On All Saints' Day, Orleans attended a solemn service, whereat he swore never to bear arms against England, though Gloucester showed his disapproval of the proceedings by walking out before Mass.³ On November 3rd the indentures were signed, and the Duke set out for his native land to mediate between the two rival kingdoms. The release had no effect either way. Party faction broke out in the French "Praguerie," which found a leader in the Dauphin Louis, but it failed to secure the support of Burgundy and was quelled. Orleans achieved nothing save a reconciliation with Burgundy, which alienated the French Court, and he retired to a country retreat, where he became the centre of one of the most literary and polite societies of his age.

The departure of Orleans did nothing to appease party feeling in England. Gloucester was still entrusted with some official business,⁴ there was even some thought of employing him in the French war, but in July, 1441, an indirect attack was made upon him through his wife Eleanor, who was publicly arraigned with three accomplices for dabbling in sorcery, with intent to procure the King's death and the consequent succession of her husband to the throne. After a

¹ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, II. 451-460.

² See Beaucourt, III. 149-151.

³ Paston Letters, II. 46-47.

⁴ Cal. of Patent Rolls (1436-1441), 376.

trial, for which a special court was empanelled, she was condemned to lifelong imprisonment after walking thrice in public penance through the streets of London. Gloucester was impotent to save his duchess, though he never forgot her and strove constantly to procure her release. The very publicity of her penance, the attention it attracted from the chroniclers, and the poems written on the subject,¹ all suggest that it was organised and advertised by the Duke's enemies.² Apart from political considerations, this incident led in the following year to an enactment that Peeresses should be tried before the same tribunal as Peers would be under similar conditions.

Meanwhile, the great problem of peace or war, and alternatively, if it was to be peace, by what methods should it be secured, still lay unsolved. The English position was getting more and more desperate. In April, 1439, the brave old Earl of Warwick succumbed to his exertions at Rouen, and his place was taken by John Earl of Somerset, the most incompetent member of the Beaufort house. During 1440 Harfleur was recovered from the French, and a friend of Gloucester's, the Duke of York, was appointed to the chief command, but political intrigue delayed his departure till the summer of 1441.³ His energetic campaigning had no results, and on October 25th the English lost their last foothold in the Isle de France, when Pontoise was stormed and large numbers of its English garrison were put to the sword. Still the Government at home continued to provide men and money with dogged perseverance, despite the strain on the resources of the country. In 1442, for instance, some 2500 men were sent out under Lord Talbot, who had come back to raise them, and who was rewarded at the same time for his long and arduous services by promotion to the Earldom of Shrewsbury. Hopes of internal factions in France were still entertained. The belated attempts of Charles VII. to suppress robber bands had accounted in some measure for the support which the opposition to the French Government had met in the Praguerie, the renewal of which seemed imminent, and the discontented, under the leadership of Burgundy, Orleans, and Alençon, were in communication with England and anxious for peace. At the same time they were

¹ Political Songs (Rolls Series), II. 205-208, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS. Classis C., 813, ff. 11^{vo}-12.

² Fabian, 614.

³ *Lond. Chron.*, 127; Gregory, 183.

trying to draw the Count of Armagnac to their side, and to this end suggested a marriage between his daughter and Henry VI, a plan at once taken up by the English Government, who commissioned envoys and even managed to interest the King in a matter which affected him so nearly.¹ Unfortunately for the success of the embassy, Charles VII had decided to invade Gascony, and when Bishop Beckington reached Bordeaux in July, 1442, he found it impossible to communicate with the Count, as the enemy lay all around. Nothing could be done save arrange for the painting of portraits of Armagnac's three daughters, as Henry insisted on having a choice, and in January, 1443, the envoys returned to England, hopeless of getting into personal communication with the Count, who protested that he was as warmly in favour of the match as ever.² Had it succeeded, the political results of the mission would probably have been nil. The power of Charles VII was increasing daily; the days when the divisions of France could provide an open door for English invasion ended at Arras. The real problem before the Council was whether the English could possibly equip two armies to save Normandy and Guienne. Opinion was divided, some thought both should be attempted, others believed it impracticable, and as usual Gloucester and Beaufort took opposite sides, though the Cardinal of York, no longer so great a partisan of Beaufort, was inclined to support the King's uncle.³ Nepotism and party politics complicated the situation, as Beaufort was anxious to supersede Gloucester's friend York by his nephew the Earl of Somerset. For this purpose it was desirable to send but one army to be placed under the new general's command, and accordingly on March 30th, 1443, Somerset was appointed Captain-general of all Fiance and Guienne, though a saving clause was introduced guarding the rights of York in the districts where he was in active command. The Council strove to conciliate York by telling him that Somerset would guard his flank, and York was calmly asked to "take patiens and forbere him for a tyme" with regard to £20,000 due to him, as the fitting out of the fresh expedition had entailed great expense.⁴ The greatest difficulty was found in raising troops, and men of rank refused to serve, but the expedition duly sailed, not for Bordeaux,

¹ *Foedera*, xi. 6-8; *Bekynton Correspondence*, ii. 181.

² *Bekynton Correspondence*, ii. 180-237.

³ *Ordinances*, v. 223-224, 229.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 259-264.

whither it had been originally destined,¹ and where help was so sorely needed, but for Cherbourg Somerset proved a complete failure. He believed so much in secrecy, that he declared that he would burn his shirt did it suspect what was his plan of campaign, but even his shirt could not guess that which was non-existent² Before long he returned, covered with ridicule, to sink into a dishonoured grave

On Somerset's death the wardship and marriage of his three-year-old heiress Margaret were given as a free gift to William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, an unusual proceeding, which led men to believe that the child was to be married to Suffolk's son John. This descendant of the Hull merchant and of the Counsellor of Richard II had been for some years a figure of some political importance, and by his connexion with the House of Beaufort he now found himself a prominent member of that clique which so jealously surrounded the King, all the more prominent since Cardinal Beaufort was retiring into private life. He it was, therefore, who was appointed to lead an embassy to France, which was to carry through a piece of Beaufort manœuvring in the interests of peace abroad and political domination at home. The support given by Gloucester to the Armagnac match had been enough to cause its abandonment,³ and the ruling faction was now ready with another candidate for the position of wife to Henry VI, again at the suggestion of Orleans. The lady was Margaret of Anjou, daughter of René Duke of Lorraine and titular King of Sicily and Jerusalem. Though a man of more claims than possessions, René was in the innermost circle of the French Court, owing to the fact that his sister was Queen and his brother, Charles of Anjou, one of the King's chief advisers. In February, 1444, Suffolk's commission was made out, and with him were joined Adam Moleyns, Dean of Salisbury, and Sir Robert Roos, the last of whom had served with Beckington on the fruitless embassy to Bordeaux; but Gloucester raised all kinds of objections, and Suffolk complained that "sith my going is opened among the people" aspersions had been cast upon him in London.⁴ Still the embassy went forth, and though a peace proved impossible, Margaret was betrothed to Henry VI on the basis of a paltry truce

¹ *Bekynton Correspondence*, ii. 216

² *Basin*, i. 149-152.

³ Rumour said that Suffolk had intrigued to this end (*Brut*, 509).

⁴ *Ordinances*, vi. 32-34.

for two years, in the hope that this might lead to a final pacification. Suffolk returned to England, but was soon sent back to escort the promised bride to England, though he had some difficulty in securing possession of the lady's person, and it was said that it was at this moment, caught unawares by the fear that all his labours would prove fruitless, that he was betrayed into agreeing to the cession of Maine to the French. When at last Margaret was brought to England, she chose this inopportune moment to develop smallpox,¹ an unhappy augury which was not hidden by the magnificence of her marriage and coronation. Englishmen were more than suspicious of this alliance.² It was said that England had bought a Queen not worth ten marks a year, and Parliament ignored the £5500 spent on bringing her to England and made a very meagre grant. This was the more remarkable as Gloucester, the leader of political opposition, not only accepted the marriage when arranged, but supported Suffolk when he challenged approval for his recent actions in Parliament. Rightly or wrongly, Englishmen came to date the beginning of England's woes from this marriage. "Fro this tyme forward King Henry never profited ne went forward, but fortune began to tuin fro him on al sides," wrote a contemporary some years later.³

Undoubtedly the Angevin marriage helped to aggravate the relations of parties at home. Henry was no more than a stalking horse for ambitious ministers, and the Beauvoir party had sought to secure a Queen who would mould him to the shape that they desired. His interests were ecclesiastical and academic. He was far more intent on the canonisation of Osmund and King Alfred,⁴ on the success of his foundations at Eton and Cambridge, and on the restoration of Grammar Schools up and down the country,⁵ than on matters of state. He was quite incapable of governing a great kingdom, and left all to his ministers. We have his own statement that it was an unusual thing for him to transact business in person,⁶ and when French ambassadors came to interview him, they could report no remark of his save a few phrases of courtesy, the whole negotiation being left to others.⁷ Such a man

¹ *Ordinances*, vi. p. xvi.

² *Paston Letters*, ii. 73

³ *Brut*, 511-512.

⁴ *Bekynton Correspondence*, i. 117-119

⁵ *Rot. Parl.*, v. 137.

⁶ *Bekynton Correspondence*, ii. 181.

⁷ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, i. 143-148.

was a godsend to an ambitious party, especially when his wife threw herself, young and inexperienced as she was, into Court intrigues. She could not but be grateful to Suffolk for having brought her from obscurity to such a great estate, and her gratitude was shown by assisting him to be predominant in the kingdom, and by allying herself with his friends the Beauforts, Lord Say, and Adam Moleyns, in opposition to Gloucester and York. Such support was sorely needed. Any day the cession of Maine might become public knowledge, and this may account for Suffolk's warlike utterances in Parliament,¹ and the solemn farce wherein ministers protested that the peace with France was desired by the King on his own initiative, and had not been suggested by the lords or any other of his subjects.² It explains also why every effort was made to poison the King's mind against his uncle, the success of which was plainly seen when French envoys visited the King in 1445. Throughout the negotiations Suffolk acted and spoke with the greatest assurance, maintaining that the opposition of Gloucester was a negligible quantity, and the King was induced to behave most slightlying to his uncle.³ But the announcement of what it was feared would be considered a betrayal of the nation could not be long delayed, especially as in December, 1445, in answer to French pressure, the King signed an undertaking to surrender Maine, without, however, mentioning Suffolk's share in the transaction.⁴ Before this announcement was made Gloucester must be removed. Denied access to the King, and removed from the Privy Council, he was even indicted before the Council for malpractices during his Protectorate. Suffolk laid certain accusations against him, and in 1447 obtained the summons of Parliament to Bury, "the whiche parliament was maad only for to sle the noble Duke of Gloucester".⁵ The victim was all unconscious that large numbers of men had mustered, ostensibly to guard against his designs upon the King, and made no preparations beyond an escort of some eighty horsemen. On arrival he was at once put under arrest, and his personal servants were removed from him. Five days later he was dead. Nothing can remove the suspicion that he was murdered, the exposing of his body after death was in itself a confession that foul play might be sus-

¹ Rot. Parl., v. 74.

² *Ibid.*, 102.

³ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, i. 110-111, 123.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 634-642.

⁵ Eng. Chron., 62.

pected, and it is clear that, even if he died of disease, he did but thereby anticipate the machinations of his enemies. All things were ready to procure his downfall, as the immediate dispersal of his property proves, and the accusations of plotting to slay the King, brought against his followers, were plainly merely advanced to justify a murder.

The death of Gloucester is the complement of the Angevin marriage. "This began the trouble in the reame of Englond for the deth of this noble Duke of Gloucestre, and al the communes of the reame began forto murmuie for it and were not contente," wrote an English chronicler.¹ Gloucester while he lived was a safety-valve to the dynasty. As leader of those who opposed the party in power, he gathered round himself all the discontented elements in the nation, notably the Duke of York, who had a rival, some thought a better, claim to the throne than the Lancastrians. While he acted with Gloucester, York was making it impossible for himself to use his claims to promote sedition, but he was an ambitious man, and he never can have forgotten the fact that the Mortimer claim to the Crown lay with him. It was useless to recall him from France and send him to govern Irelancl, where the Earl of Ormonde had been proving very unsatisfactory;² one day he would prove a greater danger than Gloucester had ever been. For the time, however, Suffolk was supreme. No one could compete with him, for Cardinal Beaufoit had followed his old rival to the grave within a few weeks, and his surviving relatives had none of the fiery ability, the business acumen, and the untiring political activity of this prince of the Church. If as a statesman he had helped to pave the way for the discord of civil war, as a politician he had been supremely successful. Still, despite his ability, Suffolk was by no means safe, and was at this very time complaining to the King in Council of his detractors.³

The Government had every reason to be anxious. The rank and file of the nation had suffered from a succession of bad harvests. There was a great lack of corn in 1429,⁴ a hard frost during the winter of 1436-1437 did so much destruction that in the following autumn the crops failed.⁵ Pestilence followed as a natural sequence,

¹ *Brut*, 513.

² Proceedings of the King's Council in Ireland (Rolls Series, 1877), 273-287.

³ Foedera, xi, 172-174.

⁴ Cal. of Letter Book K, 92-94.

⁵ *Brut*, 470, 471, 507, Gregory, 181, W. of Worcester, 762.

it was particularly virulent in the North,¹ and in the Parliament of 1439 the King's lieges begged to be allowed to dispense with the kiss of homage for fear of infection. Some attempt was made to relieve the wants of the people. The Londoners imported rye from Prussia, "which eased and did myche gode to the peple,"² and, taught by experience, they later erected a public granary at Leadenhall to provide a store against similar contingencies.³ The natural accompaniment of famine was trouble in the labour world, which led the Commons in 1444 to complain of the "sodeyn departyng of servaunts of Husbondrye fro their maistres atte ende of theire termes withoute due warnyng," and of the inadequate fines imposed by justices of the peace for such behaviour. It was also found necessary to issue a new schedule of wages, due probably to an agitation for higher renumeration owing to the rise in food prices.⁴ Meanwhile, the Exchequer was drained dry. In 1439 the judges threatened to resign in a body, as no salaries had been forthcoming for more than two years.⁵ In 1442 even Cardinal Beaufort, when pressed for a loan, had no cash to spare, and could only lend plate, for which he demanded repayment at a rate which should include not only the value of the metal, but also the cost of manufacture, a very expensive form of borrowing for the Government. At the same time it was found necessary not merely to pawn, but to sell, certain royal jewels for the expenses of the war. The Earl of Shrewsbury had claims of over £12,000 on the Treasury, and even when he agreed to wipe off a portion of this as a bad debt, he had not received the remainder in 1454.⁶ The Duke of York was owed a still larger sum.

Worse sign than all was the growing anarchy in the country. The magnates were doing their utmost to monopolise political power by securing the exclusion of all but knights, or gentlemen who could qualify for that rank, from representing their shire in Parliament,⁷ and the evil results of their predominance were to be found in the complaints of the extortions and oppressions practised by sheriffs, and in the way these same sheriffs strove to get permanent control over their offices, which legally they could retain for only one year.⁸ Still more serious were the feuds and private wars

¹ Gregory, 181.

² Brut, 507

³ Cal. of Letter Book K, 294

⁴ Rot. Parl., v. 112-113, Statutes, II 337-339

⁵ Rot. Parl., v. 14.

⁶ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, I. 434-436, Rot. Parl., v. 263.

⁷ Rot. Parl., v. 115-116.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 108, 110.

which went on quite unchecked. "Divers compaignies of men have ben sey araigned in gyse of werr," and "many men hurte and slawe" in a quairel between Sir William Bonville and the Earl of Devon in the West, in which Somerset took sides¹. In the North Archbishop Kemp, practically at war with the Earl of Northumberland and too busy with politics to reside in his diocese, quarrelled with his Knaresborough tenants. Less conspicuous, but no less serious, were the quarrels between Sir John Neville and the Abbot of Fountains, between Lord Grey of Ruthin and the men of Northampton, and between the citizens of York and the Abbot of St. Mary's. Disturbances, traced to a monkish agitator, were reported from the Welsh border, a rising, ending in several executions, occurred in Kent,² riots at Salisbury and in Derbyshire and resistance to the collection of local dues, combined with seditious language, in London betrayed the growing spirit of anarchy. The authority of the Justices of the Peace was universally disregarded,³ and the soldiery coming from and going to the war added to the confusion by committing numerous outrages in the southern counties.⁴

To add to Suffolk's troubles there were the ever-pressing problems of foreign policy. Scotland was growing restive once more, and a royal progress in the North during 1448 only resulted in the defeat of an English force which crossed the Border, and induced the Scottish King to intrigue with France, where the question of Maine was giving trouble. When in 1447, after many evasions, the surrender of Maine was publicly ordered, Edmund Beaufort, Marquis of Dorset,⁵ who had been given the county, allowed his representatives to resist, though he had been present when the orders for cession were issued.⁶ A conference at Le Mans in October betrayed considerable shiftiness on the English side, and even then surrender was not made, though Dorset received the substantial sop of the Lieutenancy of France and Normandy. Still the struggle went on, and it was not till March, 1448, that Le Mans was surrendered, and then only because the French mustered an army to compel its submission, whereupon Dorset was promoted to his late brother's Dukedom of Somerset. A renewal of hostilities seemed imminent.

¹ Ordinances, v. 158, 165-166, 173-175, 408.

² Gregory, 181.

³ Rot. Parl., v 28.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 61-62.

⁵ The younger brother of the deceased John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset.

⁶ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, ii. 692-710.

Charles VII. was anxious to pick a quarrel¹. He complained that Somerset refused redress for alleged infringements of the truce, while the English Government could only urge their lieutenant to avoid a rupture by the use of dilatory measures,² such as they employed in suggesting that Henry should cross to France to interview Charles, and ever postponing the event. They had provided Somerset with elaborate instructions for his conduct, and had emphasised the necessity for good and equitable government, but they gave him no support. In 1449 he reported "the grete pussance and long advysed ordenannce, furnyshed with all manere abillements of werre of thadverse part, . . . wherefore ht may be presupposed by theire froward deeds and contrarious disposition that theire intention is not to procede effectuelly to eny good conclusion of pees". The English in Normandy were not ready for attack, they had insufficient men and artillery, "but well nygh all places ben in such ruyne, that though they were stufed with men and ordenaunce, the be so ruynous, that they be unable to be diffended"³. This distressful picture failed to open the purse-strings of Parliament, though a portion of the money voted was directed to be used for the defence of Calais, the one place whose retention every one considered essential.

Such being the situation of the English soldiers in Normandy, and such the temper of Englishmen, it is the more remarkable that Suffolk was directly responsible for renewing the war. In March, 1449, an English raiding party sacked and seized Fougères in Brittany. The French King protested at this attack upon his vassal, but Somerset replied that he had no power to control his men, indeed it seems that Suffolk had inspired this infringement of the truce behind Somerset's back.⁴ By way of reprisal the French seized Pont-de-l'Arche, near Rouen, much to the surprise and indignation of Somerset. The last stage of the Hundred Years' War began with an almost simultaneous attack by the French on Normandy and Guienne. In Normandy the English were quite unable to resist the threefold advance of French, Burgundian, and Breton. Town after town was captured, and in October the invading forces were concentrated on Rouen, which capitulated in November. Before the close of the year Haifleur had once more

¹ *Chron. Hen. vi*, 36

² *Ordinances*, vi 62 64.

³ *Rot. Parl.*, v 147-148.

⁴ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, i. 278-298.

fallen into the hands of the French¹ In Guienne the Count of Foix took some fifteen places round Bayonne. The home Government could not give Somerset sufficient support Some £10,000 were sent during the year, and in October, 1449, a force of 2500 men was prepared under Sir Thomas Kyriell, but proved inefficient and unruly On landing at Cherbourg in March, 1450, Kyriell found that Harfleur and Fresnoy had fallen Disregarding his instructions to join the English forces at Caen,² he lingered about in the Côte-d'Or, taking Valognes. Reinforced by troops sent by Somerset, he at length made up his mind to obey orders, and set off for Caen, but having crossed the estuary of the River Vire without molestation, he was overtaken by a French force under the Count of Clermont at Formigny. The familiar tactics of the English enabled them to hold their own for a time; had they acted on the offensive they might have done more, but the arrival of the Constable de Richemont with reinforcements gave the day to the French. Matthew Gough with some of the cavalry escaped, but the rest were surrounded and nearly all slain.³ The French had won no such victory since the defeat of Clarence at Beaugé, an event which one chronicler recalled as he penned an account of Formigny.⁴ and now that they could defeat their enemy in the open the end could not be far off. Vire, Bayeux, and Avranches fell in quick succession, and Caen surrendered in June, quickly followed by Falaise, Domfront, and Cherbourg "Shirburgh is goon," wrote one of John Paston's correspondents, "and we have not now a foote of londe in Normandie, and men are ferd that Calese wole be besieged hastily"⁵

Having won Normandy, Charles VII. turned his attention to the relics of the inheritance of Eleanor of Aquitaine in Southern France. A council of war held at Tours in September, 1450, decided on an immediate advance on Bergerac, which yielded, and in November the French won a victory at Blanquefort within a few miles of Bordeaux The English made a faint effort to send succours under Lord Rivers, but they never got away, and when opera-

¹ Blondel, 45-152, Berry, Hérault, 254-324, J. Chartier, ii. 74-181; Du Clerq, 609-610

² Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, ii. 595

³ Blondel, i. 157-176, Berry, Hérault, 330-338; Gruel, 223-225; J. Chartier, ii. 191-200; M d'Eschoucy, i. 276 286, Basin, ii. 234-238; *Paston Letters*, ii. 147.

⁴ Blondel, 177.

⁵ *Paston Letters*, ii. 162.

tions recommenced in the following spring, the French found that the Gascon nobles were on their side, though as a French chronicler puts it, "the nobles and the people have always been false rebels to the Crown of France".¹ Even the Count of Armagnac appeared in the field to west the last remnants of Aquitaine from Henry VI's feeble grasp; Bordeaux and Bayonne both capitulated, and the French King was at last master of Guienne. But this was not the end. The men of the Bordelais had been well governed by the English, they chafed at the loss of their trade with London, and at the abrogation of their old laws; after a few months of French rule they sent offers to revolt, if only an army were despatched to aid them. The offer was taken, men were encouraged to enlist by promises of plunder in addition to their pay, and in September the Earl of Shrewsbury was appointed Lieutenant of the King in Aquitaine. In October he landed in Guienne, where the Anglophiles within Bordeaux threw open the gates, and the English were once more in possession of the Bordelais, thanks to the unpreparedness of the French and the loyalty of the natives to the Plantagenets.² In England the Government prepared to send further reinforcements, and Parliament even talked of making a grant for the purpose, but before anything could be done the French advanced into Guienne in June, 1453, and set siege to Castillon. Shrewsbury hastened to the rescue, but when he charged the earthworks thrown up by the French engineers, his men were decimated by the artillery, and he himself fell mortally wounded. The last battle of the war ended in decisive rout (July 17th, 1453). Even then, with Shrewsbury slain and the English army practically wiped out, the fortresses of the Bordelais did not submit at once. It was not till Charles entered Bordeaux on October 17th that the Hundred Years' War was at an end.

The year 1453 saw the close of one of the most disastrous ventures recorded in English history. As the English Council truly said through the mouth of Henry VI in 1440, Edward III. had failed, Henry V. had almost seen the turning of the tide,³ and no one could hope to succeed. Since 1415 the English had seen great successes and great failures. The early religious enthusiasm which had led Henry V to ascribe his victories to the intervention

¹ J. Chartier, II. 240.

² *Ibid.*, 331-333.

³ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, II. 453 455

of the Almighty, had passed to the side of the French with the advent of Jeanne d'Arc. The discipline of the English national army, fighting in what it believed to be a national quarrel during the early stages of the war, had been in strange contrast to the conduct of the mercenary soldiers of the French, undisciplined, unversed in arms, and recruited from Spain, Gascony, Italy, and Scotland,¹ but the superstitious fears engendered in the English soldiery by the appearance of the Maid had led to total demoralisation, and to a return to the brigandage and riotous conduct of the soldiery of Edward III, while in 1453 Charles VII. led a national army, well drilled, well disciplined, well armed, and well paid.² Not only the moral but the material aspect of the struggle had changed. At the beginning of the contest the bow had been the superior weapon. At Agincourt, at Crevant, at Verneuil, and at the "Battle of the Herrings" it had been the superiority of the English archer that had won the victory, and English defeats had been attributable to the absence of the archer, Clarence had left his bowmen behind at Beaugé: at Patay the French were victorious because they caught the English archers before they could draw their bows. But in the later stages of the wars the long bow had given place both in range and deadliness to artillery, in which the French excelled. Under the care of the brothers Jean and Jasper Bureau, "who during this war underwent great perils and pains," cannon, after a century of very slow improvement, had become really important in war.³ Apart from siege operations, where they were very effective, as engineering science had not kept pace with them, the guns played a notable part in the two principal battles of later years, especially at Castillon, where they alone procured the defeat of the English. Thus the tables had been turned in almost every direction, but above all in the state of the two countries. The political divisions of France, so desperate at the beginning of the century, were now much appeased; it was something approaching a united nation that Charles VII. led against Normandy and Guienne, while in England the national solidity, which Henry V. had temporarily procured, had given place to divisions which by 1453 had reached the threshold of civil

¹ Basin, 1 48-49, St. Remy, 11 79.

² Berry, Hérault, 370-371.

³ *Ibid.*, 372-374.

war. It was Macchiavelli, writing early in the next century, who summed up in a few pregnant sentences the secret of the early success and ultimate failure of the English in France. "Into France," he wrote, "you can always find an entry through the great nobles, who are often discontented. Such persons are able to open the way for you to the invasion of their country and to render its conquest easy. But afterwards the effort to hold your ground involves you in endless difficulties, as well in respect to those who have helped you as of those whom you have overthrown"¹

¹ *Il Principe* (ed. Burd., Oxford, 1891), 202.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE BEGINNINGS OF YORK AND LANCASTER
(1450-1459)

"OUR enemies laugh at us, and say 'take off the ship from your precious money, and stamp a sheep upon it, to signify your sheepish minds'. We who used to be the conquerors of all peoples are now conquered by all"¹ Such were the musings of Englishmen as they saw their power waning in France. When bit by bit the French secured first Normandy and then Guienne, when news of Formigny and Castillon were brought home, men came to blame the Government instinctively, and to fasten on Suffolk as the prime engineer of disaster,² pointing quite wrongly to the surrender of Maine and Anjou as the starting-point of failure

Suffolk, it is true, had played his cards badly. He had conceded much for a marriage which had only brought a fitful peace, and he hastened the renewal of hostilities by juggling with the actual fulfilment of his promise to France in deference to home opinion, and finally by sanctioning the unwarrantable attack on Fougères. As a result political agitation was increasing Rhyming satires were scattered about the country, reviling Suffolk and his friends, and bewailing the loss of great men and the absence of any one to take their places. As one chronicler has it, "there was noo good rule nor stableness at that tyme to greet discomfort and hevyness of the peple".³ The temper of the nation was illustrated by the murder of Bishop Moleyns in January, 1450, at Portsmouth, by Kyriell's riotous soldiery, for being "the traitor who had sold Normandy".⁴ Rumour had it that in his last moments he let fall words which told heavily against Suffolk, whose impeachment was being pre-

¹ Capgrave, *De Illustribus Henricis*, 135. Cf. the oft-quoted "Label of English Policy," Political Songs (Rolls), II. 159. The money was the gold noble, whose obverse displayed the King in a ship.

² *Six Town Chrons.*, 125.

³ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁴ W. of Worcester, 766.

pared by Lord Cromwell, ex-member of the Beaufort party. Suffolk replied by allowing one of his followers to make a murderous assault on Cromwell, a clear confession of weakness, and more openly he challenged approval of his policy in Parliament. But the recital of the services to the nation performed by himself and his family failed to impress the Commons, who petitioned for his immediate arrest, as by his own confession serious charges were laid against him. On February 7th he was indicted for taking bribes to release Orleans, to surrender Maine, and to betray the King's secrets to the French, and even for aiming to place his son on the throne by marrying him to Margaret Beaufort, the heiress of the Lancastrian House. A more justifiable accusation was that of having driven the Duke of Brittany into the arms of the French by permitting the raid on Fougères. A month later another indictment accused him of malversations as Steward of the Household, of inducing the King to grant franchises whereby "murdres, manslawters, robberies, and other felonies, iiottes and mysgouvernauncez gretely encreased," of procuring offices and grants of money for his friends, of delaying justice in the interests of criminals, and of wasting the royal treasure. To his political misdeeds were added the diversion of subsidies to purposes for which they were not intended, and procuring the breaking off of the negotiations entered into in 1442 for an Armagnac marriage.¹ Suffolk in reply sheltered himself behind the sanction of the Council, a defence which was sound as far as it went, and prophetic of the future doctrine of the collective responsibility of the Cabinet, but vitiated by himself when he went on to throw all responsibility for the cession of Maine on the shoulders of the recently murdered Bishop Moleyns.²

Both accusation and answer form an interesting illustration of the working of a mediaeval impeachment. The reason for the charge was obviously political, the Duke's foreign policy had failed, but all sorts of other charges were added, many of them clearly preposterous, so as to substantiate the indictment for treason. The battle had been fought and won behind the scenes before ever the impeachment was launched, and there could be no question of a fair trial. Suffolk had used the King's protection to defy his enemies, but once they had got under his guard, he was left de-

¹ Rot. Parl., v. 176-182, *Paston Letters*, ii. 120-127.

² Rot. Parl., v. 182.

fenceless. He was told by the Lord Chancellor, on behalf of the King, that the charges contained in the first indictment were considered neither proved nor unproved, but on the second count "touchyng mesprisions which be not crymynall," as he had not claimed a trial by his Peers but had submitted himself "hooly to the Kynges rule and governaunce," he was to be banished for five years. Not only the King but the Lords there assembled emphasised the fact that this was done on the royal authority alone, and not after consultation with the Peers.¹ In other words, the impeachment was to be dropped, but Suffolk was to be removed definitely from office. It was an attempt at compromise, to preserve the life of a fallen minister and to anticipate modern constitutional procedure, but it failed. There was a growing feeling that he was, as the Commons put it next year, "the cause and laborer of the arrest, emprisonyng and fynall destruction of the most noble valiant true Prince, your right obeisant uncle the Duke of Gloucester". Public opinion was already beginning to attribute imaginary virtues to the "Good Duke,"² and making his name a watchword with those who complained of Lancastrian rule. To this feeling Suffolk fell a victim, for he only escaped the London mob³ to fall into the hands of some sailors as he crossed the Channel. Taken on board the "Nicholas of the Tower," he was beheaded there and then, the men of his own ship readily assenting to the deed. Great was the joy in England when the news was known, though some few mourned the unfortunate Duke, whose death marks yet another stage towards anarchy and civil war. The days of reprisal had begun. Looking back from the turmoil of the Wars of the Roses a chronicler, with Duke Humphrey in his mind, could say, "This began sorew upon sorew, and deth for deth".⁴

The country had tasted blood. Within a month of the murder of Suffolk the men of Kent were in open rebellion. Their leader called himself John Mortimer, claiming to be a cousin of the Duke of York; at other times he adopted the title of "John Amendale," and according to one story he was a certain John Aylmer, a doctor by profession and a man of some position, married to a squire's daughter. The Government maintained that he was an Irishman named Jack Cade, who had been obliged to flee the

¹ Rot. Parl., v. 183.

² Chrons. of London, 158.

³ W. of Worcester, 767.

⁴ Brut., 516.

country for an act of violence. He was certainly no mere peasant, and he placed himself at the head of a movement which was not plebeian but popular. In some cases whole townships turned out, and men were mustered from the hundreds in due form by the constables to join the rebels. It was in fact a protest from all those classes whose rights, such as they were, were being lost under the pressure brought to bear on elections and the limitation of the franchise in 1430. The complaints made by the insurgents also point in this direction. They spoke of a party surrounding the King, which was instilling false doctrines into his mind such as that "our sovereyn lorde is above his lawys to his pleysewr, ande may make it and breke it as hym lyst," or that "the Kyng should lyve upon his commons and that ther bodyes and goods ben the Kynges". This same party told him that the "commons of England" desired to drive him from the throne in favour of the Duke of York, kept all who did not bribe them from having access to the presence, and practised extortion on gentlemen and yeomen. For this no one class was to blame—"We blame not all the lordys ne all tho that is about the Kyngs person, ne all jentyllmen ne yowmen ne all men of lawe, ne all bysshops, ne all prestys," and "we wyll not robbe, ne reve, ne steele, but that thes defautes be amendyd, and then we will go home". To this end the insurgents demanded the removal of "the fals progeny and affynyte" of Suffolk and the recall of York, "exlyd from owre sovreyne lords person," together with the Dukes of Exeter, Buckingham, and Norfolk, the punishment of all concerned in the death of Gloucester and the loss of the French possessions, the suppression of purveyance, the extortions of tax gatherers, and the "statute upon the laborers," and the punishment by death of all courtiers who henceforth should take any kind of "brybe for eny byll of petysyons or caws spedynge, or lettynge".¹ These demands were undoubtedly moderate, as some contemporaries realised,² they were clearly more political than social, and in a way they put into words what later was largely the nominal programme of the opposition as led by the Duke of York. Their constitutional tone is a little reminiscent of the revolution which drove Richard II from the throne, while the request for the

¹ Stow Memoranda in *Three Fifteenth Cent. Chrons.* (Camden Soc. 1880), 94-99.

² *Eng. Chron.*, 65.

abolition of the Statute of Labourers shows that the movement was not merely the work of discontented politicians

Early in June, 1450, the rebels appeared at Blackheath, and after a reverse suffered by the King's men on July 8th, London made feverish preparations to resist attack, and sought to exclude all nobles from the city on the pretext that provisions were short. The King fled to Kenilworth, despite the prayers of the citizens that "he wolde tarye in the cite and they wolde lyve and dye with him, and pay for his costes of household an halff yere," and on July 3rd Cade, supported by the men of Essex who had appeared at Mile End, entered the city.¹ The Londoners offered no resistance, even when the rebels butchered Lord Say in Cheap. But when Cade's moderation gave way to plundering and pillage, the thrifty citizens awoke to the fact that "ther was many a man in London that . . . wold fayn have seen a comon robbery," and in concert with Lord Scales, the governor of the Tower, attacked Cade's guards on the bridge. All through the night of July 5th the fight raged, and by morning the citizens had managed to destroy the drawbridge. The insurgents were still in force, but mediation and the promise of pardons induced them to go home, though Cade, realising that his pardon under the name of Mortimer would avail him nothing, tried to organise further resistance, but was captured at Heathfield in Kent and conveyed to London mortally wounded.

The story of the rebellion of 1450 in London is strangely similar in detail to that of Wat Tyler's triumph and subsequent fall in 1381, and the parallel is likewise true in other parts of the country. At Edington, in Wiltshire, Ayscough, Bishop of Salisbury, the King's confessor, was dragged from the altar while saying Mass, and done to death in full canonicals on a neighbouring hill. Elsewhere Booth, Bishop of Lichfield, and Lehart, Bishop of Norwich, both members of the Queen's household, were threatened,² Booth in particular being an object of popular hatred.³ In August two new popular leaders appeared in Kent, it was reported that several thousand men were in rebellion in Wiltshire, and Sussex and Salisbury witnessed other

¹ An inquiry was later held as to how Cade got in. It was established that he secured the keys, but exactly who surrendered them was not absolutely proved. *City of London Journal*, 5 f. 40^{ro}, cited in Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, i. 284.

² Gascoigne, 40, 41-42.

³ Political Songs (Rolls Series), ii. 225-229.

risings. It is evident that discontent was widespread, and that men were beginning to look to the Duke of York as the one hope of the nation. It was therefore natural that the Duke should take this opportunity to return from Ireland, and despite the efforts of the Queen's friends to waylay him, he reached London in safety¹

As a counter stroke Somerset was made Constable of England and was recalled from Calais, where prudence had kept him since the loss of Normandy.² Thus York and Somerset became the leaders of two opposing parties in the land. The fact that after five years of married life the King was still childless made the position all the more interesting, since both York and Somerset had possible claims to the throne. If the qualification which Henry IV. had introduced into the legitimatisation of the Beauforts was invalid, Somerset was the senior male representative of the Lancastrian House. York could claim direct descent from Edward III.'s son Edmund, and by his marriage represented the Mortimer claims, which had been heard of so often during the last fifty years. For the time, however, he carefully abstained from using the arms of Lionel Duke of Clarence, from whom the Mortimers were descended,³ though he had adopted the name of Plantagenet, long since forgotten in the English royal family. Still Cade's manifesto had made it clear that men were already canvassing Yorkist claims, and the constant appearance of his name on the lips of the populace since the days of the Moleyns' murder, seemed to imply something sinister to the Lancastrian dynasty.⁴

Apart from all dynastic questions York was a force to be reckoned with, when he laid formal protest against the bad government of the realm before the King,⁵ who was quite ready to yield to the preponderating influence of the moment, and received the Duke's intimate friend Sir William Oldhall in close conference.⁶ Men anxiously waited for the next turn of events. It is plain that Richard of York had taken his cue from the recent upheaval, and he used his influence in the shires to such effect,⁷ that when Parliament met the Commons chose Sir William Oldhall as Speaker. London was by now flooded with liveried retainers, the Dukes of York and Norfolk being particularly conspicuous for the number of

¹ *Chron. Hen. vi*, 42; W of Worcester, 769

² M d'Escouchy, 1 313 314.

³ Gregory, 189.

⁴ So the King hinted (Document in Stow, *Annales*, 394).

⁵ *Paston Letters*, II. 177-178.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 176, 179, 184-185.

their followers, and it naturally resulted that riot and disorder reigned in the city, Somerset barely escaping with his life on one occasion. York, the King, and all the Lords paraded their men through the streets to restore order, "which was the gloryousest sight that ever man in those dayes sawe," and one man was executed.¹ The Chancellor's remark in opening the session, that one of the tasks before the assembled members was to repress the riotous tendencies recently evident in various parts of the country, had a very real meaning. After the Christmas adjournment, the Commons, under Yorkist influence, demanded the dismissal of certain persons from attendance on the King, notably Somerset and Suffolk's widow. The King's qualified assent was forthwith nullified by his placing Somerset in entire charge of the royal household: and when after long delays the Bristol member, Thomas Young, proposed that York should be acknowledged as heir to the throne, Parliament was dissolved and Young was imprisoned. The absolute helplessness of the Commons is here splendidly illustrated. The Lords with the largest retinues were Somerset's supporters, though the people still believed in York, and the middle classes, as represented in the Commons, were almost unanimously on his side.² Military force commanded the situation, and York might have spared himself the trouble of influencing the elections.

Meanwhile, in the West the local war between Lord Bonville and Courtenay, Earl of Devon, blazed out afresh, the finances of the country were still in a state of confusion, the unfortunate judges were still unpaid, and everything seemed to be in suspense. Somerset was still in high favour at Court, and in January, 1452, York tried to counteract the insidious stories his enemies were pouring into the King's ears.³ Within a month he returned to the charge in a letter addressed to the men of Shrewsbury, in which he accused Somerset of maligning him, and of being responsible for recent national disasters, and announced his intention "to proceed in all haste against him with the help of my kinsmen and friends".⁴ It was a declaration of war. Accompanied

¹ *Chron. Hen.*, vi., 42, W. of Worcester, 769, *Six Town Chron.*, 136-137, *Chron. of London*, 162, Gregory, 195.

² *London Chron.*, 137.

⁴ Ellis, *Letters*, 1st Series, i. 11-13.

³ Document in Stow, *Annales*, 393.

by Devon, Cobham, and other Lords he advanced to London. The King came to Coventry, having ordered Lord Cobham, and presumably all York's supporters, to "come to oure presence there to awaite upon us and do service." York, however, persevered. He had with him a long indictment, which accused Somerset of peculation and incompetence in his Norman command,¹ others said that avaice was his chief vice,² but the only effective argument against him was force. The Yorkists made straight for London, which closed its gates, and obliged them to find their way across the Thames by Kingston Bridge to Dartford. A few Kentish men joined, but it was practically a purely baronial army that lay encamped opposite the Lancastrians, who had retraced their steps to Blackheath. Many about the King were still labouring for peace, indeed later Yorkists such as Salisbury and Warwick were to be found in the royalist camp. A conference ended in the promise of a free pardon to the Yorkists and the arrest and trial of Somerset, if York would disband his army. but when Richard had fulfilled his part of the compact, and "came to the Kynges tent, the Duke of Somerset was still awaytyng upon the Kynge as chief abowte hym, and made the Duke of York to ride before the Kynge through London like a prysoner".³ Trickery had won the day, but as a Yorkist army still existed on the Welsh border, Richard was released after swearing in St. Paul's never again "to gather any routs, or make any assembly of your people without your commandment or licence and in my lawful defence".⁴ York had failed, but it was becoming daily more obvious that the country was on the eve of a great conflagration, towards which fuel had been gathering for many long years.

To some the Wars of the Roses, as historians have wrongly called them, since the red rose was never a badge of the House of Lancaster, seemed to be a direct retribution for the renewal of the Hundred Years' War.⁵ A spirit of unrest had been engendered by the constant campaigning and later pillaging in France, and the returned soldiers had produced a state of terrible uneasiness in the country. In 1450 the Mayor of London had to place a special guard at St. Bartholomew's Fair to prevent them plundering the "chapmen and peple of the contree. For the world was so strange

¹ *Paston Letters*, i. 103-108

² *Basin*, i. 192-193.

³ *Chron. of London*, 163. ⁴ *Brut*, 350.

⁵ *Commissaries*, i. 195.

that tyme, that noo man might well ride nor goo in noo cooste of this land without a strength of ffelauship but that he wer robbed".¹ This soldiery went to swell the retinues of the great nobles, who had definitely triumphed over the attempts to put down the practice of livery. Others had grown powerful and rich through the war, and this at the expense of the Crown.

So pore a King was never seene
Nor richere lordes alle bydene²

Some men, like York and Shrewsbury, might have to wait for the payment of their dues, but on the whole the balance was greatly in favour of the magnates. Besides, the war had enabled them to increase their political importance in a kingdom harassed by foreign complications, and without a strong ruler, and by their quarrels open the way for a pretender to the throne. York, having been attacked by the Suffolk and Somerset interest, came to understand, like Lorenzo de Medici in Florence, that it went ill in England for those who did not control the Government. His alternatives were absolute suppression or dominance. Though he might use popular discontent with Lancastrian administration as a weapon in his armoury, he was not in the main the leader of a popular movement. The struggle of York and Lancaster was a "barons' war" and did not concern the commonalty. It was regarded by participants as a somewhat serious sport for kings and noblemen—a sort of glorified tournament, with the Crown and revenues of England for a prize, and with Parliament as a much terrorised Queen of Beauty to award it. Others found it a useful way of paying off old scores. Thus when Devon deserted to the Lancastrian side, his old enemy Bonville became a staunch Yorkist. No question of principle was at stake, no desire to relieve the downtrodden from oppression inspired the men who fought in the Wars of the Roses.

After York's second failure and humiliation there was a pause in party conflict. Embryo risings were reported from Norfolk and Sussex, but "that year hyt was competent welle and pessabylle as for any ̄ysyng among oure selfe, for every man was in chaeryte, but sum what the heitys of the pepyl hyng and sorrowyd for that the Duke of Gloucester was dede, and sum sayde that the Duke of

¹ *Six Town Chrons.*, 135.

² *Political Songs (Rolls Series)*, ii. 230.

Yorke hadde grete wronge, but what wronge there was noo man that darste say, but sum grounyd and sum lowyld and hadde dysdayne of othyrs.¹ When Parliament met in March, 1453, it was apparent that York's grievance was that Somerset was still in full control of the Government, and had taken care to influence the elections in his own favour.² Not only did the Commons vote a subsidy and tonnage and poundage for the King's life, but they asked that the petitions of the last Parliament should be cancelled and that all Crown grants made to the "traitours assembled in the feld at Dertford" should be resumed. Further, Oldhall, the Yorkist Speaker in the last Parliament, was attainted as one of these "traitoures" and as one who had taken part in Cade's rebellion. But though the Somerset party was supreme in the Government, it had no power to maintain peace in the nation, and when the King prorogued Parliament, he did so partly on the plea that he wished to make a progress through the country to suppress certain standing disorders. It was perhaps to make this progress effective, or more probably to crush the Yorkists, that a scheme was discussed for raising 20,000 archers "for the defence of the kingdom".³

The political situation became still more acute when on August 10th, 1453, the King went mad, and on October 13th the Queen gave birth to a son, "of whose birth the peple spake straungely".⁴ The King was far too ill to understand what had happened, and no precedent existed to solve such a problem, though it was obvious that it offered a golden opportunity for Yorkist interference. The Government therefore abstained from summoning York to the great Council, which was bidden to assemble, but later it was compelled to do so, and Somerset decamped, nor was he present a month later when York lodged a formal protest at the exclusion of certain old councillors. The Yorkists secured the immediate re-adjournment of Parliament, when it met on November 12th, to February 11th, and forthwith the Duke of Norfolk laid an accusation against Somerset before the Council. The opposition to the Government was so strong that, to save the accused Duke from an immediate trial and condemnation, he was committed to the Tower. A crisis was obviously at hand.

¹ Gregory, 197-198.

² Rot. Parl., v 265-267.

³ *Six Town Chrons.*, 139-140.

⁴ *Eng. Chron.*, 70.

The London authorities ordered every citizen to arm himself, but to guard his tongue and abstain from provoking any lord, and it was thought wise not to pay a proposed visit of respect to the Duke of York for fear of seeming to take sides,¹ though the city had reason to be annoyed with the Lancastrians. Both sides mustered their forces for the coming encounter. According to a letter of January 19th, 1454, the Chancellor was arming all his servants "to awaite on the saufgarde of his persone", the Earl of Wiltshire and Lord Bonville were promising at Taunton to take into their service all who would come at sixpence a day; the Duke of Exeter and Northumberland's son, Lord Egremont, had met near Doncaster to discuss plans, Lords Beaumont, Poynings, and Clifford "maken all the puissance they kan and may to come hider". The Duke of Buckingham was having 2000 badges made, "to what entent men may consture as their wittes wole yeve them". All these were Lancastrians, and for their reception a servant of Somerset's had "taken up all the loggyng that may be gotten" in the district round the Tower where his master lay, including Tower Hill, Mark Lane, Thames Street and St Katharine's. Moreover, "the Duke of Somerset hathe espies in every Lordes hous of this land, some gone as freres, some as shipmen taken on the sea, and some in other wise, which reporte unto hym all that thei kun see or here touchyng the said Duke". York's letters were intercepted, and there was danger of his supporters falling into an ambush on their way to London. On the other hand, York was expected to arrive within a few days "with his householde meynee, clenly beseen and likly men," his young son the Earl of March was to have another escort, and their equipment was to be sent on in carts. The Earl of Salisbury was bringing 140 knights and squires apart from othe. men. "The Earls of Warwick, Richmond, and Pembroke comen with the Duke of York, as it seide, everych of them with a godesly feliship," Warwick's being estimated at a thousand men²

The most prominent of York's supporters were the Earl of Salisbury and his son the Earl of Warwick. They represented the younger branch of the Neville family, being the descendants of Henry IV.'s friend, the Earl of Westmorland, by his second marriage

¹ *City of London Journal*, 5. ff. 131, 132^{vo}, 133^{vo}, cited in Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, 1. 288.

² *Paston Letters*, ii. 296-299.

with Joan Beaufort. Joan's eldest son became just as important a person as his elder half-brother, by marriage with the only child and heiress of the Earl of Salisbury, at whose death before Orleans not only the Montacute estates, but also the Earldom, devolved upon him. Thus the present Earl of Salisbury, though a younger son, ranked among the greater magnates, and had considerable territorial power in Wiltshire and Hampshire, besides scattered manors in other parts of the country, increased when his mother died by the Yorkshire estates which had formed her jointure. The alienation of this Yorkshire property from the Westmorland title was a great grievance to the head of the house, and the quarrel which ensued between the two branches of the family soon developed into a private war. Westmorland sought an ally by marrying one of the Percies, and as he was a Lancastrian to the core, it was almost inevitable that the Yorkshire Nevilles should drift into the Yorkist camp, especially as Salisbury's sister Cicely was married to Duke Richard. In August, 1452, Northumberland's son, Lord Egremont, had seen fit to attack Salisbury at Stamford Bridge, near York, an event which caused great disturbances, amounting to a miniature civil war,¹ and drove Salisbury finally into the arms of York. Salisbury's son, Richard Neville, was no less a personage than his father. He had married Anne Beauchamp, who in 1449 brought to her husband the inheritance of her father the Earl of Warwick, on the successive deaths of her brother and his only child. This meant that besides the title Richard secured vast territories in South Wales and Herefordshire, including the castles of Caerphilly and Cardiff. Other compact blocks of land were to be found in Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, and Buckinghamshire, besides scattered manors in seventeen other counties and Barnard Castle in Durham.² York also could number among his supporters the other sons of Ralph Earl of Westmorland and Joan Beaufort, William Lord Fauconberge, George Lord Latimer, Edward Lord Abergavenny, and Robert, Bishop of Durham. The Duke of Norfolk, married to a sister of these men, brought his influence in East Anglia to the Yorkist side, and Viscount Bourchier, whose wife was York's sister, was also destined

¹ W. of Worcester, 770, *Chron. of London*, 164; Ordinances, vi. 140-142, 147-151, 154-155, 158-163.

² For the various Neville inheritances see Oman, *Warwick the King-maker*, 12-34.

to follow his brother-in-law's lead. Lord Cromwell seems to have been on the same side,¹ though later he quarrelled with Warwick, and other members of the Yorkist party at this time were the Earl of Devon and Lord Cobham, as were also the Earls of Richmond and Pembroke, though these sons of Queen Catherine and Owen Tudor were soon to rally to the side of their half-brother the King.

When the various magnates and their retinues arrived in London for the reassembly of Parliament on February 13th, it was clear that the battle was to be fought on the question of who should be regent for the insane King. Margaret desired the post, with liberty to appoint ministers and bishops,² but the first victory lay with her opponents, when York was empowered to open and dissolve Parliament, and perform all royal acts therein. On the other hand, the Commons demanded the release of their Speaker Thorpe, committed to prison during the recess till he should pay certain damages recovered from him by York in the Court of Exchequer. The prosecution seems to have been purely for political motives, and Thorpe had used his enforced leisure to draw up an indictment against York.³ The case was argued before the Lords, the judges refusing to give an opinion on a question of parliamentary privilege, and was decided against Thorpe. So far successful, the Yorkists scored another success when Lord Cromwell secured surety of the peace against the Duke of Exeter, and the Lancastrians retorted by impeaching Devon for his share in the "field at Dartford," though they failed to get a conviction. Still the regency question was undecided, and the Commons were getting impatient, desiring "that it should lyke the seid lieutenant and Lordes to have specially and tenderly recommended the peas of this land," a hint that open war might break out at any moment. The problem was complicated by the death of Chancellor Kemp a few days later, whereby not only the chief administrative office under the Crown, but also the Archbishopric of Canterbury was vacated. There was a rumour abroad that the King's health had improved,⁴ but it proved to be false, and the Lancastrians could no longer put off the evil day. York was appointed Protector, protesting that he had assumed the title at the request of Parliament.

¹ Rot. Parl., v. 264; *Paston Letters*, ii. 334.

² *Paston Letters*, ii. 297. ³ *Ibid.*, 296. ⁴ *Ibid.*, 306.

and that his loyalty to the King was not thereby in doubt, and he secured the vacant Chancellorship for Salisbury, and the Arch-bishopric for Thomas Bourchier, Bishop of Ely, a man with relatives in each camp, but a Yorkist at heart.

York's short tenure of power was mainly occupied in suppressing "the straunge and unsittynge demeanyng of the Duc of Excestre, the Lord Egremond and Richard Percy," as he called it. Egremont "hath now late made and dayly maketh greet assemblies of oure lige people . . . an divers and strange proclamations to stirre oure trewe subgittes into rebellion and breking of oure lawes and pees". Exeter, who ventured to make his way incognito to London, was arrested, and York went North to restore order.¹ So strong were the Lancastrians, that Somerset's friends, sure of an acquittal, tried to have him brought to trial, and York dared not risk it, so his rival was still in prison when the King recovered his senses at the end of the year, despite the attentions of the five doctors who prescribed for him. On January 7th the Bishop of Winchester and the Prior of St John of Jerusalem found that "he speke to hem as well as ever he did"² The recovery of the King might seem to be a matter for rejoicing, but in reality it precipitated the outbreak of civil war, as his wife was in complete control of him when he was in his very feeble senses. She was an active energetic woman, evidently fond of hunting, and insistent on the preservation of her game,³ though sometimes willing to interfere in a kindly spirit, as when she begged for a dowry from Cardinal Beaufort's executors for two "poure creatures" who desired to be wedded, or remonstrated with a recalcitrant parent who had refused consent to his daughter's marriage.⁴ She strove to control the Government in her husband's name, and we may well suspect that she was a far more important element in the struggle than the incompetent Somerset, who nevertheless was immediately released from confinement on the King's recovery, to be used as a useful tool. Changes in the holders of ministerial posts proclaimed that York had not only ceased to be Protector, but was deprived of all power. Salisbury gave place to Archbishop Bourchier at the Chancery, the Earl of Wiltshire became Treasurer, and as a final

¹ Ordinances, vi. 130-131, 189-197, 217-218, *Paston Letters*, ii. 321, 324.

² *Paston Letters*, iii. 13-14.

³ *Letters of Queen Margaret*, 118.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 102, 105.

mark of the change of rulers, Exeter was released from confinement. A Council was called "for surtee of the King's moost noble persone," which York rightly took as a menace to his safety.¹ Margaret had made war inevitable by transforming loyalty to the King's person into a party cry. It was the old story all over again. A baronial party rose in arms against a Court party which dominated an incapable King.

York, Salisbury, and Warwick mustered their forces, advanced to Royston, and thence by Ware to St. Albans, where they found Henry, who had been brought out against them with a large number of magnates, including Devon and Pembroke, hitherto known as Yorkists. From Royston a letter had been despatched to the Chancellor, and from Ware one had been sent to the King, in which the Yorkists justified their appearance in arms as a protective measure but Somerset took care that neither should reach Henry. Nothing could better justify the statement of the opposition, that the King was being run for the benefit of a clique². It was on May 22nd at seven in the morning that the Yorkists reached St. Albans, and after three hours of useless parleying York opened the attack, while Warwick led his men into some gardens, and thence through the houses into Hollowell Street. Taking the enemy unawares on the flank with the cry "A Warewe! A Warrewyk! A Warrewyk!", these men soon decided the day. The Earls of Somerset and Northumberland, Lord Clifford and about sixty others were slain. Henry, though slightly wounded, was compelled to accept the protestations of the Yorkist leaders that they meant no treason by their action, "and on the morwe the Kyng and the seyde Duke, with other certyn lordes, came in to the Bysshops of London, and there kept resydens with joye and solempnyte, concludyng to holde the Parlement at London the IX day of July next comyng". The first battle of St. Albans was no more than a skirmish. The armies were small—at the most "the Lancastrians had 3000 and the Yorkists 5000 men, though considerable reinforcements were coming up for the latter"³—and the participants were exclusively magnates and their re-

¹ Rot. Parl., v. 280

² *Ibid.*, 280-282, *Paston Letters*, iii. 23-28, *Chron. of London*, 165; *Chron. Hen. vi*, 47

³ *Paston Letters*, iii. 29-30.

tainers. The result was a change of ministers. Archbishop Bourchier was left at the Chancery, but his Yorkist brother went to the Treasury, and York took the office of Constable of England rendered vacant by Somerset's death. Warwick received the captaincy of Calais, which was so important a post as almost to rank as a ministerial appointment¹. The Londoners wisely manifested joy, but the obvious desire of the rank and file of the nation was to keep out of the quarrel altogether. York did his best to influence the parliamentary elections, even by official letters, written in the King's name though in cautious language,² and when the assembly met, Sir John Wenlock, a Yorkist who had fought at St. Albans, was elected Speaker. But "sum men holde it right straunge to be in this Parlement, and me thenketh they be wyse men that soo doo". Even the members of the victorious party were suspicious of one another. "Lordes stand in hele of there bodies but not all at hertes ees," wrote one observer, who described how Warwick tried to throw the blame for the "male journey of Seynt Albines" on Cromwell. Ultimately it was found prudent to make the dead Somerset responsible for the event, which paved the way for the passing of a bill of amnesty for York and all who fought on his side at St Albans, "to the which bill mony a man groged full sore nowe it is past". But protest was out of the question, since Warwick, York, and Salisbury brought their retinues to Westminster, as the best possible argument in the event of a debate.³ It is noticeable that Warwick's name comes first in the list.

No new policy, no great reforms signalled the return of the Yorkists to power. They were content to emphasise their position as heirs to Gloucester's policy, and to govern in the King's name, for by June 5th Henry was once more in the doctor's hands with a return of his old malady. Men began to prophesy of wars to come, a battle was to be fought before St Andrew's Day, worse than anything since Harry Hotspur fell at Hatreley Field. Moreover, the Bonville and Devon quarrel broke out again, culminating in pitched battle outside Exeter, and when Parliament reassembled in November, the Commons asked for the appointment of a Pro-

¹ *Paston Letters*, iii. 31

² *Ordinances*, vi. 246-247, *Paston Letters*, iii. 34, 36, 38-39.

³ *Paston Letters*, iii. 43-44, *Rot Parl.*, v. 280-283.

tector, because a strong Government was needed owing to "grete and grevous riotes doon in the Weste countrey".¹ After some demur York agreed to accept the Protectorate, limited as before by the power of the Council, but terminable on this occasion only when the Lords in Parliament decided that the King was fit to undertake the burden of Government. The Protector tried to restore peace in the West Country, but his position was not sufficiently secure to enable him to do anything effective. When the King began to recover in the New Year, York and Warwick tried to overcome Parliament with armed men, but though the King seemed willing to employ York as his chief counsellor, "the Quene is a grete and strong labourid woman, for she spareth noo peyne to sue hire thinges to an intent and conclusion to hir power". The superstitiously inclined found cause to regard the appearance of a "grete gleymyng sterre" as a portent of evil omen.²

Despite the Queen's intrigues and the cessation of the Protectorate, York's enemies were not able to attack him openly. Government in any real sense of the word there was none, and the meetings of the Privy Council went unrecorded with one significant exception, when a commission was issued for the trial of some insurgents in Kent. York was evidently anxious to keep Margaret from her husband, and both parties were manoeuvring for position as appears from a letter of June, 1456—"my Lord York is at Sendall stille, and waytith on the Quene and she up on hym".³ Under the circumstances it is strange that the only noteworthy disturbance of the peace was caused by the attacks of Londoners on certain Lombard merchants, though the King's letter to the Mayor ordering him to allow no one in future to enter the city if accompanied by too large a retinue,⁴ suggests that commercial rivalry was not the only disturbing influence in the city. The best illustration of the intrigue and counter intrigue going on behind the scenes is to be found in the foreign policy of the country. James II. of Scotland had had many troubles of late, but these did not prevent him from suggesting to Charles VII. a simultaneous attack on Calais and Berwick in June, 1455, and again in the following year, when the divisions between York and Lancaster seemed too

¹ Rot. Parl., v. 285-286.

² *Paston Letters*, iii. 74-75.

³ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁴ Cal. of Letter Book K., 377.

good an opportunity to be missed¹ In 1456 he also sent a defiance to England, which was answered in haughty terms by the Government, then under the influence of the Duke of York, but when this communication was enrolled among the Scottish Chancery Records it was prefixed by a note disclaiming all responsibility for it on behalf of Henry VI, since York had usurped the Government. York's share in this transaction is the more honourable as James declared himself a believer in the legitimacy of his title to the throne,² and the interference of Margaret—for Margaret it must have been—betrays how purely factious was her share in the political strife. Still more was this the case with regard to France. York had some idea of allying himself with the discontented French princes, by marrying his son to a daughter of the Duke of Alençon, while Margaret encouraged her countrymen to invade England in the hope of discrediting the Yorkist Government.³ Margaret, however, was hoist with her own petard, since it was not till August, 1457, that the French plundered the town and neighbourhood of Sandwich, and before this she had secured the dismissal of the Yorkist ministers at a Council held at Coventry in October, 1456, Lord Bourchier giving way to the Earl of Shrewsbury and the Archbishop yielding the Chancellorship to the Bishop of Winchester.

The change of ministry was signalled by a vain attempt by Exeter, Somerset, and the new Treasurer Shrewsbury, to waylay Warwick on his way to London,⁴ but the Earl was left in command of Calais, perhaps as a means of keeping him at a distance. A similar attempt to get rid of York by reappointing him Lieutenant of Ireland, failed through the Duke's refusal to take up his duties "Almost all the affairs of the realm were conducted according to the Queen's will, by fair means or foul, as was said by divers people. What will be the end of these things, God knoweth," wrote one nearing his end.⁵ Margaret ruled without the assistance of Parliament, which had been summoned practically annually in recent years. The Grand Council, or House of Lords, which was a revival of the Angevin Commune Concilium, was usurping the position of the elected body not only in fact but in theory: for Margaret, with French traditions behind her, did not think it

¹ Stevenson, *Letters and Papers*, i. 319-326

² *Ibid.*, 324.

³ M. d'Escouchy, ii. 352

⁴ *Six Town Chrons.*, 144.

⁵ Gascoigne, 204.

necessary to adopt the fiction of working through Parliament. She knew that the predominating factor in the political life of the nation was the power of the magnates, and she did not understand how important is tradition, how people are often satisfied with the shadow instead of the substance of liberty. It was Richard II's open annunciation of absolute doctrines, not his despotism, that produced his fall, and it was Margaret's use of the Great Council instead of Parliament, not her aristocratic principles, which threw a cloak of constitutionalism around the equally aristocratic Yorkist party. Renewed disturbances between the Nevilles and the Percies in the North suggest that neither side was supreme, since the former had managed to obtain heavy damages at the York Assizes for injuries received in a battle recently fought with their rivals¹. To the Council of 1458 all the magnates, York and Salisbury on the one side, Somerset and Exeter on the other, brought large followings; most noticeable of all was Warwick who came from Calais with 600 men "in rede jaquettes browdred with a ragged staff behynd and afore". The Yorkists were lodged round Baynard's Castle—their leader's city palace—the Lancastrians outside Temple Bar, since they were denied entrance to the city, as it was rumoured that the young Lords whose fathers had been slain at St Albans—Somerset, the Percies, and Lord Clifford—were bent on revenge, and the Mayor had to keep a large force arrayed "to see that the Kynges peace was kepte".² Negotiations were carried on almost as though between two hostile armies, while the French were said to be hovering round the south coast. A desire for peace may perhaps be inferred from the strict censorship exercised over all sermons preached before the King so far as they touched political questions,³ and contrary to all expectation terms of agreement were arranged, whereby all blood feuds were to be laid aside in consideration of money compensation paid by the Yorkists to the relatives of those who had fallen at St. Albans. The conference, begun in such fear, ended in joy; York and the Queen, Salisbury and Somerset, Warwick and Exeter, walking

¹ *Brut*, 523-524, *Chron. of London*, 167, Whethamstede, i. 303.

² *Chron. of London*, 168, *Six Town Chron.*, iii, 159-160; *Brut*, 525; *Eng. Chron.*, 77, *Paston Letters*, iii. 125.

³ Gregory, 203.

hand in hand to St. Paul's on Lady Day to proclaim their new found concord.

Only a saint or a fool could have thought that this pacification could last. "All these lordys," wrote a London Alderman, "departyd from the Parlyment, but they come nevyr alle togedyr aftyr that tyme to noo Parlyment nor counselle, but yf hyt were in fylde with spere and schylde".¹ Peace could only come with a complete victory from one side or the other. During the lull Warwick, who in 1457 had been appointed to "keep the sea" to the intense indignation of Exeter, whom he supplanted,² won the hearts of the English sailors by several victories in the Channel, though he seems to have been guilty of what amounted to at least one act of piracy, into which an inquiry was ordered, more for reasons of party than anything else. An attempt, made late in 1458, to deprive him of the governorship of Calais in favour of Somerset provoked the renewal of hostilities. While in London concerning this matter, a brawl between his followers and the men of the King's household at Westminster led to an attack on his own person. "Coques come renyng out with spyttes and pestelles ayenst him," and it was with difficulty that he made his escape by water, and evaded subsequent arrest by retiring to Warwick, and thence to Calais.³ Troublous days were coming again. Rumours crossed the Channel of grave disturbances and attacks on the judges by Exeter. The kingdom "was oute of alle good governaunce, as it had be meny dayes before, for the Kyng was simple and lad by covetous counseylle, and owed more than he was worthe. His dettes encreased dayly, but payment was there none; alle the possessyonns and lordeshyppes that perteyned to the crowne the Kyng had yeve awey. . . . And suche ymposiciouns as were put to the peple . . . was spended on vayne, for he helde no householde ne meyntened no warres. For these mysgovernaunces, and for many other, the hertes of the peple were turned away from, thayme that had the londe in governaunce. The Quene with such as were of her affynyte rewled the reame as her lyked, gaderyng ryches innumerable. The officers of the reme, and specially the Erle of Wylshyie tresorere of Engelond for to enryche hymself, peled the pore peple, and dishertyd ryghtefulle eyres, and dede meny

¹ Gregory, 203-204.

² Foedera, xi 406; *Paston Letters*, iii. 127.

³ *Chron. of London*, 169; *Brut*, 526, *Eng. Chron.*, 78.

wronges."¹ The Queen was the key of the situation. "Every lord in Englund at this tyme durst nat disobey the quene, for she rewled pesibly al that was done about the Kyng, which was a gode, simple and innocent man."² By April, 1459, she was openly making levies under the privy seal. In Cheshire she was distributing the badge of the Swan to all who would wear it, and she did not neglect to provide bow-staves and arrows "But she coude nat bryng her purpos aboue" Her unpopularity caused the revival of those whispers which had greeted the birth of her son, who was now loudly proclaimed to be "a bastard gotten in avoutry".³

The Yorkists "saw that the governance of the Reame stode moste by the quene and hir Counsell, and how the gret princes of the lond were nat called to councell bot sett aparte, and nat onely so, but that it was seid through the reame that the said lordes shold be destroyed utterly." They therefore began to muster, and Salisbury came into collision with a detachment of the Queen's army which strove to intercept him as he marched Having defeated Lord Audley at Blore Heath on September 23rd, under cover of darkness he drew off his men, leaving a faithful friar to let off guns at intervals during the night to make the Lancastrians think that he still lay in the neighbourhood.⁴ The Yorkists succeeded in joining forces at Ludlow, whither Warwick came with a detachment from Calais. The Lancastrians advanced, making attempts to negotiate, and to detach the Yorkist adherents from their leaders, which led to protestations on their part that any action they had taken was dictated by the necessity of self-preservation. Their numbers were small, and as the royal army advanced their position seemed more and more desperate. At length, when the two armies came into touch with one another, Sir Andrew Trollope went over to the King with the Calais contingent, and flight was the only hope for the leaders All managed to escape, York and his younger son, the Earl of Rutland, to Ireland, the Nevilles and York's heir, the Earl of March, to Calais, while the Lancastrians in their wrath sacked Ludlow. "Whenn they hadde drokyn inowe of wyne that was in tavernys and in othyr placys, they fulle ungoodeley smote owte the heddis of the pypys and

¹ *Eng. Chron.*, 79

² *Brut*, 527.

³ *Eng. Chron.*, 79, 80

⁴ *Rot. Parl.*, v. 348; *Gregory*, 204; *Brut*, 526; *Eng. Chron.*, 80, *Six Town Chron.*, 148; *Chron. of London*, 169; *Whethamstede*, i. 338.

hoggys hedys of wyne, that men wente wete-schode in wyne, and thenn they robbyd the towne, and bare awaye beddyng, clothe, and oþyr stuffe, and defoulyd many wymmen.”¹ Truly it was a strange way for an army fighting in defence of legitimate royalty to treat one of its master’s towns.

For the moment the Lancastrians were supreme in England, and in a sudden reversion to constitutionalism, a Parliament was called to register their victory. Taking a leaf from the Yorkist book, they resorted to the most unblushing packing of the assembly, so much so that the sheriffs petitioned for indemnity for all irregularities due to the haste with which they had to make their returns, and later it was said that members were returned without due election, and sometimes without even the form of one.² The business of the session was of a purely party nature. York, Salisbury, and Warwick, with their chief associates, were attainted of treason, and the unfortunate Duchess of York “was kept full straye and (had) many a grete rebuke” under the supervision of her brother-in-law Buckingham.³ All the Lords, including Yorkists like the Duke of Norfolk, were compelled to swear allegiance to the King, to protect the Queen, and to acknowledge Edward as heir to the throne.⁴ It was now everywhere recognised that the struggle had become dynastic

¹ Gregory, 207. Cf. *Eng. Chron.*, 83; Whethamstede, i. 345.

² Rot. Parl., v. 367, 374.

³ Gregory, 207, *Brut*, 528. Cf. *Eng. Chron.*, 83.

⁴ Rot. Parl., v. 351-352.

CHAPTER XXIV

EDWARD IV KING AND EXILE
(1459-1470)

ON the whole the nation showed itself profoundly apathetic as to the dynastic struggle of York and Lancaster, the victory of neither side caused popular uprising, such as had accompanied the Mortimer victory in 1327, or the Lancastrian triumph of 1400. Public opinion, too, was regarded by the Lancastrians at least as a negligible quantity, for in a manifesto issued by them to justify the attainder of the Yorkists the argument that the condemned lords were "suche as stoden gretely in the favoure of the peple" was scoffed at. "As for the favoure of the peple thaire is no grounde of sure argument, for by cause hit is so varyable and for the moost parte it groweth of oppynnable conceytyis, and not of trowith. Hit is a schreywyde consequence. The peple favoureth hem, ergo thay be good" Further, "thaire intent was so subverted to commone welthe, as it may be provyd expressly by thairgument of thar demeynyngge towardis the Kynges peple," moreover whatever their intentions, "what auctorite and power had thay to reforme it, the Kynge present and not yevynge them commyssioun tharof".¹ Truly Lancastrian constitutional theory was wearing rather thin under the influence of a foreign queen. This closely reasoned argument may have been addressed to the King, whose known leniency might give the Lancastrians qualms; more probably from its tone it was addressed to those magnates who, though friendly to the Yorkists, had not taken part in the rout of Ludlow.² But it can have had little influence, for the issue of Commissions of Array and attempts to raise money by privy seals drove the people of Kent to look to the Yorkists. Men began to slip across the

¹ Document printed in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xxvi 513-525.

² See also the arguments for and against the attainder of the Yorkists given in Whethamstede, i. 346-355

Channel to join Warwick at Calais, and popular feeling was fanned by Yorkist ballads which appeared mysteriously in public places¹. Even some of the ships taken by Somerset to dislodge Warwick deserted and sailed quietly into Calais harbour, while in January, 1460, a Yorkist descent on Sandwich captured several ships made ready to transport reinforcements to Somerset, together with Lord Rivers and his son Sir Anthony Wydevile. On the arrival of the prisoners at Calais, Salisbury, Warwick, and March took turns at reviling them as upstarts, for the family had risen from insignificance through the marriage of Rivers to the Duke of Bedford's widow: but the Nevilles were hardly the right people to complain of such methods. The incident, however, is an interesting sidelight on the supposed democratic tendencies of the Yorkists; it has its irony too, for before long Rivers was to be not only a Yorkist, but the father-in-law of the Earl of March, who was now practising his youthful powers of invective upon him.

At home the Lancastrians found the country restive under their rule; at sea they had so far lost control that in May Warwick was able to sail to Ireland to concert plans with York, and on his way back to defy the royal fleet under his rival the Duke of Exeter, who was obliged to retire, doubtless fearing insubordination on the part of his men. Englishmen generally wished to evade participation in a quarrel which was not theirs. The men of Sandwich had taken no part for or against the Yorkists when they seized Lord Rivers, and they were equally apathetic when in June their town was occupied preparatory to a Yorkist invasion. The plan of campaign, arranged in Ireland, was that a simultaneous descent should be made on the West and South of England, and accordingly Salisbury, Warwick, and March landed at Sandwich on June 26th.² In Warwick's mind there was probably little hesitation as to what he intended to do. He had already told a Papal Legate at Calais that "our King is stupid and out of his mind; he does not rule but is ruled. The government is in the hands of the Queen and her paramours"³. This hint that the Prince of Wales was no son of the King was stated more openly by pamphleteers, who told the people that the Prince was born in false wedlock, with

¹ *Archæologia*, xxix 330-334, *Eng. Chron.*, 91-94.

² Cal. of Venetian State Papers, i. 90

³ *Pii Secundi Commentarii*, a. R. O. Joanne Gohellino (Romae, 1584), 161.

the implication that York ought to be accepted as heir to the Crown,¹ but in public manifestos the invading Lords confessed to no intention of upsetting the succession. They came to recover the estates and goods taken from them : they complained of bad government, the oppression of the people, and over-taxation. They were loyal to the King, but sworn enemies to the clique controlling the Government, heirs to the policy of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester who had been foully murdered, and avowed opponents of the absolutist doctrines proffered by the party in power.² As they advanced on London, Archbishop Bourchier and Lord Cobham joined them, together with other "statys and comyns of Kent," but the attitude of the nation was well illustrated by the behaviour of the London authorities. The gates were strictly guarded. At the same time a deputation was sent to Warwick, to bid him avoid London on his way to Northampton, where the King lay. But on July 1st the Earl's letter told the citizens that the army would not turn aside, and on July 2nd, without let or hindrance, the Yorkists marched into the city. It was plain that the Londoners, while wishing to keep the Yorkists out, were much too wise to risk their necks by resistance. Moreover, once in the city, the Yorkists received considerable help in attacking the Tower, held for the Lancastrians by Lords Scales and Hungerford, since as men said "there seemed to be no other way of preserving the city," and two days later the city voted a loan of £1000 to the Earls who commanded the situation.³

Salisbury and Cobham were left to conduct the operations against the Tower, while Warwick and March hastened towards the King, supported by the Archbishop, four bishops, and Lords Fauconberge, Clinton, Bourchier, Abergavenny, Scrope, Say, and Audley, the last though the son of the man slain by Salisbury at Blore Heath, had gone over none the less to the Yorkists. Having scoured the country in two divisions, late on July 9th they found the Lancastrians entrenched outside Northampton, and on the following day, after the usual fruitless parley, they advanced to the

¹ *Eng. Chron.*, 91 94

² Ellis, *Letters*, 3rd Series, i. 85-88; *Eng. Chron.*, 86-90; Document in *Chronicles of the White Rose* (London, 1845), pp. lxxiv-lxxvi.

³ *City of London Journal*, 6 ff 251, 253; cited in Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, i. 301.

attack. The day was won before half an hour had passed, for Lord Grey of Ruthyn, who commanded the Lancastrian left wing, traitorously assisted the Yorkist right up the slippery bank of his defences. The Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Shrewsbury, and the Lords Beaumont and Egremont were slain, but not more than 300 others fell, since Warwick had bidden his men slay the Lords but let the others escape, a striking departure from tradition, which betrays the spirit which inspired the whole contest. The King, once more in Yorkist hands, was escorted in triumph back to London, which he reached on July 16th. Three days later the Tower was starved out, Lord Scales being murdered by the turbulent Thames boatmen, and some of his followers falling victims, more judicially, to the party hatred of their opponents. The spirit of vengeance had descended upon the struggle.

The three Earls were now in command of the Government. They appointed new officials, with Warwick's brother, George Neville, Bishop of Exeter, as Chancellor, and even took upon themselves to issue joint letters to royal officials on matters of public policy,¹ while the King amused himself by hunting round Greenwich and Eltham. Richard of York, strangely late in his arrival, did not land at Chester till the second week in September, and even then lingered in the Midlands, administering justice on the authority of "dyvers straunge commissions fro the Kyng".² Probably few, therefore, were prepared for the royal state with which he arrived in London, for his abrupt entrance into the assembled Parliament as though he would ascend the throne, for his occupation of the King's quarters in the Palace of Westminster, and his dismissal of his sovereign to the Queen's apartments. Even the Lords, purged as they were of Lancastrian supporters, were very loth to acquiesce in this new development, and when on October 16th York laid a formal claim to the throne before them, they tried to evade giving an answer. They interviewed the King, who asked them to find reasons to rebut the claim, they tried to get an opinion from the judges, who were far too wary to respond, they appealed to the Crown lawyers, who sheltered themselves behind the judges, finally they drew up objections of their own, based on York's past acceptance of the reigning dynasty and the parliamentary act settling the succession. York replied to these objections,

¹ *Paston Letters*, iii. 221-222.

² *Ibid.*, 233.

but to avoid a deadlock it was agreed that Henry should remain undisputed King and accept York as his heir. It was said that the King "for fere of dethe graunted hym the crowne,"¹ but he did not protest when in defiance of the recent agreement Richard had himself proclaimed Protector. The reluctance of the Lords in a Yorkist Parliament to upset the succession seems to point to the fact that it was their own political ascendancy, and not a dynastic change, in which they were interested. If we are to believe a foreign contemporary, Warwick himself was much opposed to the claim, and remonstrated with the Duke in person, being supported by the Earl of March, though opposed by York's younger son Rutland; indeed it was only at the last moment that Duke Richard consented to cancel a coronation ceremony for which everything had been prepared.² The story is not unlikely. Warwick was regarded by some as far more indispensable to his party than its leader, whom he was doubtless intent on controlling. That division existed in the Yorkist ranks seems likely from the fact, that when they had to go against the Lancastrians who were mustering in the North, York, Salisbury, and Rutland took the matter in hand, leaving Warwick with the King in London, while March went to Gloucester and thence to Shrewsbury.

Meanwhile, Northumberland, Devon, Exeter, Somerset, and other lesser Lancastrian Lords were converging in Yorkshire, where the estates of Salisbury and York were being ravaged. It was not till the end of December that the Yorkist force, which when it left London was totally inadequate in numbers, came into touch with the enemy near Wakefield, where a battle ended in a complete rout, the death of York and Rutland and the capture and execution of Salisbury. The heads of the slain were placed on the gates of York, Richard's being adorned in derision with a paper crown,³ a sign of the growing ferocity of the struggle.

The death of York marked no epoch in the struggle: he had been driven from the first place by Warwick, just as Henry had given place to Margaret as leader of the Lancastrians. Between these two the contest seemed to rest. As for Margaret, the Lords of her party "wolde fayne hadde hyr unto London, for they knewe

¹ Gregory, 208.

² Waurin, v. 314-317. Cf. Whethamstede, i 378-381.

³ W of Worcester, 775.

welle that alle the wo[k]yngys, that were done, growe by hyr, for she was more wytyer than the Kynge".¹ When the Yorkists secured London she had retired into Wales, but when Wakefield was fought she was in Scotland, trying to raise forces. A few months previously James II. had attacked Roxburgh Castle in the Lancastrian interest, and though he fell during the siege, the Scots won the place and seized Wark. Margaret now obtained a Scottish contingent for use in England, but only seemingly at the price of surrendering Berwick, that prized border stronghold which was the key of the northern frontier.² Early in 1461 she started southwards at the head of a motley host of Scottish, Welsh, and other foreign mercenaries and a full muster of the chief Lancastrian nobles. The army swept down England on such a plundering raid as might have rejoiced the heart of the Black Prince. Towns were sacked, churches despoiled, and a distracted chronicler, writing in Croyland Abbey, likened the advance alternately to a raging gale and a swarm of locusts.³ To meet this advancing force, Warwick brought the King from London with a good muster of Yorkist magnates, including the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk—the last the son of Margaret's murdered friend but now reconciled to York and married to his daughter—the Earl of Arundel, Viscount Bourchier, and Lord Bonville. The two forces came into collision on February 17th, near St. Albans, where the Lancastrians, thanks to the treachery of a Kentish captain on the Yorkist side, secured a decisive victory, and regained possession of the King's person. According to an eyewitness, the Burgundian mercenaries with their new-fangled firearms were proved useless. "As for speremen they ben good to ryde before the footemen and ete and drynke uppe hyr vetayle, and many moo suche prety thyngys they doo, holde me excusyd thoughte I say the beste, for in the fote men ys alle the tryste."⁴ The way to London was open. In accordance with their usual policy the corporation sent a friendly embassy to the Queen, in hopes of averting the approach of her undisciplined Mosstroopers, a few of whom had already appeared under the walls. Margaret began parleying—her husband is said to have

¹ Gregory, 209.

² *Chron. Auchinleck*, 21; Hardyng, 406. Cf. Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, vii. p. xxxv, Waurin, v. 355.

³ *Croyland Contin.*, 531.

⁴ Gregory, 213-214.

begged her not to allow his capital to be sacked by his unruly northern friends—but while negotiations for her entry were pending, a new Yorkist force unexpectedly threw itself into the city. Having lost her opportunity, the Queen was forced to withdraw her forces northwards, still ravaging the country. It was universally agreed that had she advanced at once to London, the whole kingdom would have been in her hands, but—

He that had Londyn for sake
Wolde no more to hem take¹

Warwick had fled from the second battle of St Albans to join the Earl of March, now Duke of York, who on February 3rd had won a victory at Mortimer's Cross in North Herefordshire over the Earls of Wiltshire and Pembroke. Both of the Earls escaped, but the King's stepfather, Owen Tudor, was executed after the battle, together with other prisoners. Now the two Yorkist leaders were able to advance on London, which they entered on February 26th. It was their arrival which forced the Queen to draw off. Warwick no longer showed any hesitation as to a change of dynasty: doubtless he believed himself quite able to manage a youth whom he had trained in arms and who had shown himself amenable to his influence in the past. On March 1st Warwick's brother, the Chancellor, induced a mass meeting of citizens and retainers at Clerkenwell to organise a deputation to Edward, asking him to assume the Crown, and on the advice of a meeting of Yorkist partisans held at Baynard's Castle, Edward on March 4th went to Westminster Hall, and sitting on the throne explained his title to the Crown. Having taken the oaths as King, he proceeded to the Abbey, where he received the homage of his lieges. There was considerable show of enthusiasm, but it must not betray us into attributing Edward's accession to a popular movement. It was Warwick, now by the death of his father in command of territories twice as large as those of any subject before his time,² who had guided the revolution. At this time believed to be “of Knyghthode lodesterre, borne of a stok that evyr schal be trewe,”³ and “the moost corageous and manliest knight lyvynge,”⁴ he was one day to give the lie to such opinions.

¹ Gregory, 214-215.

² Political Songs (Rolls Series), II 270.

³ Hearne's Fragment, 299-300

⁴ *Six Town Chrons.*, 144. Cf. 147.

The most pressing danger to the new King was the Lancastrian army in the North, against which Edward set out on March 16th. He found the enemy drawn up between the villages of Saxton and Towton, about twelve miles from York, and on the 28th he managed to cross the River Aire at Ferrybridge after a skirmish with the enemy's outposts. Next day battle was joined, and for long the issue was doubtful, but the timely arrival of Yorkist reinforcements under the Duke of Norfolk turned the day against the Lancastrians, whose right wing was driven back to perish miserably in the Cock, a little stream swollen by the winter rain, while the rest of the army fled helpless through Towton to York, hotly pursued by the victors. Somerset and Exeter escaped, and with Henry and his Queen fled to Scotland, but the Earl of Northumberland and many other lords lay dead upon the field, not counting the forty-two knights captured and slain in cold blood. Later the Earl of Devon and two others were beheaded at York, their heads being substituted for those of Edward's father and brother and uncle above the gates of the city. The victor next proceeded northward, where the Lancastrians still held their own, but having presided at the execution of the Earl of Wiltshire, captured at Cockermouth, he left matters in Warwick's hands,¹ and returned to London by slow stages.

The news of Edward's victory had been well received in the capital. "I am unable to declare how well the Commons love and adore him, as if he were their God. The entire kingdom keeps holiday for the event, which seems a boon from above," wrote a London resident to an Italian merchant at Bruges. "Thus far he appears to be a just prince, and to mean to amend and organise matters otherwise than has been done hitherto"². Indeed after the coronation on June 28th, Edward issued a proclamation in which he described "the lamentable state and ruyne of this reaume of England . . . thoppression of the people, the manslaughter, extortion, perjurnie and robberye amonge theym, the . . . verrey decay of merchandise wherem rested the prosperity of the subgettts"; he declared "that Justice, the moder of virtue, hath been long exiled," and promised "to remoewe and sette apart the seid mischieves".³ There can be no doubt that such a programme appealed

¹ Foedera, xi 474

² Cal of Venetian State Papers, i 105 Cf. 103.

³ British Museum Additional MS 4613. ff. 1-4^{vo}.

to the commonalty and the trading classes. Still, at first sight, Edward's rule did not seem to differ from that of any other party leader. Enemies, such as Sir Baldwin Fulford or the London grocer Walter Walker, were executed, and Yorkist partisans were rewarded. The King's two brothers, George and Richard, were made Dukes of Clarence and of Gloucester respectively. The Treasurer Bourchier became Earl of Essex, and Fauconberge, Warwick's uncle, received the Earldom of Kent. Sir Thomas Wenlock, among many others, became a Baron. Moreover, when Parliament met on November 4th, 1461, it was merely allowed to confirm the dynastic revolution. The Commons thanked Edward for having assumed the Crown, described him as true heir to Richard II, stigmatised the Lancastrians as usurpers and their Parliaments as pretended, but refrained from repealing the statutes they had passed. A large number of Lancastrians were attainted, conversely the attainders passed on Yorkists, including the King's grandfather the Earl of Cambridge, were annulled but no supplies, not even the customs, were voted, a fact which may explain, though not justify, Edward's refusal to acknowledge the debts contracted by his predecessor with the merchants of the Staple at Calais¹. Thus did Parliament disguise revolution as a legitimist restoration, but it was not the goodness of the Yorkist pedigree but the badness of Lancastrian government that had made the change necessary.

Yet Edward soon proved that he realised the necessity of living up to his promise of mercantile protection, and the Parliament of 1463 produced a plentiful crop of statutes, all revealing the protectionist policy, which had been hardening through the century. The ever-constant complaint that foreigners were ousting the native workmen from their occupations² was met by ordering a severe inspection of industries, so that foreign workers resident in England should be unable to cut prices with wares of inferior quality. Competition from abroad was checked by prohibiting the import of wrought woollens, silks, and other commodities. Foreign merchants were forbidden to export wool, as native weavers found great difficulty in procuring raw material, and there was a consequent prevalence of unemployment. Richard II's navigation

¹ Rot Parl., v 491

² See e.g. a petition of the Cordwainers in 1451, Cal. of Letter Book K., 335.

law was partly restored, by ordering goods to be shipped wherever possible in English bottoms. One enactment of this same year introduced the principle of the Tuck Act for the first time, and showed more sympathy for the workers than had been customary of late. It forbade payment in kind in lieu of money to workers in the cloth trade, who had been "dryven to take grete part of their wages in pynnes, girdles, and other unprofitable merchandise, under such price as stretcheth not to th' extent of their lefull wages, and also delyveren unto hem wolle to be wrought by over excessive weight, which hath dryven and dryveth men and women into discorage of such labour".¹ Less wise was an alteration in the currency introduced during 1464-1465, dictated partly perhaps by a desire to remove Henry VI.'s name from the coinage, but more likely by a wish to make money, for a profit accrued to the Crown both on the actual coining and by the fact that the new coin was diminished in weight. "At the begynnynge of thys mony men grogyd passyngre soire, for they couthe not rekyn that the newe golde not so quyckely as they dyd the old golde. And men myght goo throughe oute a strete or throughe a hoole parysche or that he myght change it. And sum men sayd that the newe golde was not soo good as the olde golde was, for it was alayyd".² It was perhaps natural that Edward should try every possible means of raising money. The wars, which continued intermittently, cost large sums, and the people grumbled at the very first taxation of the reign, which was not levied till 1465.³ His personal tastes were expensive, including the collection of gold and silver goblets, tapestries, and other ornaments, and men marvelled at the display of gorgeous garments and new-fangled fashions which graced his splendid Court.⁴ His extravagance extended to an inordinately long doctor's bill, due doubtless to his lax life, but none the less he was assiduous in perambulating the country "punishing the rebellious against the law," and showed a personal interest in the administration of justice by attending the King's Bench while the Chancellor tried the case of a widow who had been robbed.⁵ Above

¹ Rot. Parl., v 501-508; Statutes, ii. 392-402

² Gregory, 227. Cf. *Chronicles of London*, 179. The charge was false, as the standard of purity was unaltered.

³ Warkworth, 3.

⁴ Devon, Issues, 471; *Croyland Contin.*, 559, 563.

⁵ *Brief Latin Chron.*, 175.

all he was determined not to allow the turbulent gentry to disregard his commands

Edward's chief difficulty lay in the impossibility of devoting his whole time to the reorganisation of Government. The turbulence of the country was not a matter of a few years' growth, and down to 1464 the North was either in Lancastrian hands, or secretly in favour of the Lancastrian cause. So equal was the balance of power that at least once during the first few years of the reign it was reported in France that Henry had been restored.¹ After Towton, Margaret found an asylum in Scotland, but as the Scottish Court was veering round to the other side, she determined to appeal to her French relatives. When, however, her embassy landed in France, Charles VII had just died, and his son and successor Louis XI. was not the man to be drawn into any course from sentiment or family feeling. At first he imprisoned Somerset, Margaret's chief ambassador, but later Burgundy's son, the Count of Charolais, who was as Lancastrian in sympathy as his father was Yorkist, procured his release. In England the air was full of rumoured invasions, but possible disturbance was nipped in the bud by the execution of the Earl of Oxford and certain others said to be in collusion with the enemy. Somerset therefore abandoned his projected invasion from the South, and at the same time the Scottish Queen was doing her best to bring about an understanding with the Yorkists, though her enemies in Scotland managed to procure a refusal of the English request that Henry should be surrendered.² Meanwhile, the Yorkist captains Lords Hastings and Montague contrived to capture Alnwick and Naworth respectively, though Margaret, now herself in France, secured from Louis the recognition of Henry as King of England, and a certain amount of assistance. In October, 1462, she landed with her reinforcements in Northumberland, and simultaneously the Earl of Pembroke was reported to be raising a force in Ireland for the invasion of England, and the Calais garrison was in open mutiny.³ Edward called out all his subjects between sixty and sixteen years of age, and set out for the North. But soon it was rumoured that Somerset was thinking of changing sides, and indeed it was not long before he and Sir

¹ Letter in Waurin (Dupont), II. 317-318.

² W. of Worcester, 779; York Records, 32.

³ Paston Letters, IV. 57-58.

Ralph Percy surrendered Bamborough and Dunstanborough, agreeing to acknowledge Edward as King. Margaret's forces failed to raise the siege of Alnwick, but even then many thought that Edward was playing a losing game,¹ an opinion strengthened when Sir Ralph Percy and Sir Ralph Grey of Heton returned with Bamborough and Alnwick to their Lancastrian allegiance. Somerset followed suit, but Margaret was obliged to return to France for help, a fruitless task: she was never to see her husband again. Burgundy was courteous but not helpful, Louis signed a truce with England for a year, and the Scots followed with a similar agreement signed on December 9th, 1463. Some Lancastrians still held out in the North, but in April, 1464, Lord Montague defeated them decisively at Hedgeley Moor, followed in the next month by a victory at Hexham. Somerset was captured and executed, and many other Lords were taken then or immediately afterwards, and executed in batches. A few castles remained to be subdued, but the position of the Yorkist dynasty was now assured. A truce for fifteen years was signed with Scotland, Louis XI was clearly ready to use Edward as an ally against his too powerful vassals, Pope Pius II brought himself to recognise Edward's sovereignty, and Denmark, Castile, and Brittany were ready to do likewise. Still in some places there survived a feeling of loyalty to the ex-King,² who was not betrayed into his enemies' hands till July, 1465.

While the Lancastrians were being crushed, a greater danger was arising within the Yorkist ranks. Abroad it was said openly that Edward reigned "by virtue of the Earl of Warwick".³ In Scotland he was described "as the conductor of the said realm of England under King Edward,"⁴ and the governor of Abbeville wrote to Louis XI. "they tell me they have but two rulers in England. Monsieur de Warwick is one; of the second I have forgotten the name".⁵ The omitted name was probably that of Warwick's brother George, the Chancellor, who in September, 1464, was promoted to the Archbishopric of York, or of another brother Montague, now created Earl of Northumberland for his share in the reduction of the North. Warwick was following the footsteps of Suffolk and Somerset, and trying to strengthen his hold over

¹ Hardyng, 410-412.

² Bain, *Cal. of Documents*, iv. 275.

³ Chastellain, iv. 159, v. 22-23

⁴ Document in Waurin (Dupont), iii. 173.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 184.

the young King by providing him with a wife. He favoured a proposal from Louis XI that Edward should marry his sister-in-law Bona of Savoy · but after having visited France at the head of an embassy to discuss it, Lord Wenlock had to inform the French on October 3rd, 1464, that further negotiations were useless,¹ for since May 1st Edward had been secretly married to Elizabeth Wydevile, the widowed daughter of the Lancastrian Lord Rivers, who had gone over to the Yorkists soon after Edward had been crowned. The lady was fair of form, but universally considered of too humble origin for a queen-consort, which explains why Edward delayed the announcement of his marriage till in September the Council urged him to take advantage of the French offer.² Warwick was naturally furious. Not only was he made a laughing-stock in Europe, but the marriage itself threatened to undermine his power. The Queen's father was a Lancastrian by tradition, her first husband had been slain fighting on the same side, and, since the war was a struggle for power between two baronial factions rather than between two rival dynasties, this grafting of Lancastrian traditions on to the Yorkist tree seemed to imply a desire on the part of Edward to be King of the whole nation, not the leader of a party. Later writers believed that the marriage was merely the result of youthful passion denied satisfaction in illegitimate fashion by the calculating coldness of the future Queen,³ but subsequent events show that Edward was already determined to throw off the control of his too powerful supporter, and he must have known that to assert himself he must bow to the conventions of the day, and build up a baronial party of his own. Almost immediately he began to make his wife's family the instrument to this end. His own marriage was hardly announced when he arranged a match between the Queen's sister Margaret and Lord Maltravers, son of the Earl of Arundel, and in January "Catherine, Duchess of Norfolk, a skittish damsel of some eighty summers, was wedded to John Wydevile, brother of the Queen, a man of twenty, a devilish marriage"⁴ A year later husbands were found for the Queen's three sisters, Catherine, Anne, and Eleanor, in the persons of the Duke of Buckingham, Viscount

¹ Document in Waurin (Dupont), II. 326-327.

² Gregory, 226-227, W. of Worcester, 783. Cf. Waurin (Dupont), II. 326-327.

³ Hall, 264. Cf. More, *Richard III.*, 58-63. ⁴ W. of Worcester, 783.

Bourchier, son of the recently created Earl of Essex, and Anthony Grey of Ruthyn, son of the equally recently created Earl of Kent. In the following March Rivers became Treasurer and was promoted to an Earldom, while later in the same year the Queen's sister Mary was married to the eldest son of the King's friend, Lord Herbert. To crown all, an heiress in the person of Anne Holland, daughter of the Duke of Exeter, was secured for Sir Thomas Grey, Elizabeth's son by her first marriage, by bribing the Duchess of Exeter with 4000 marks to break off negotiations with Warwick, who desired the lady's hand for his nephew, Northumberland's son.¹ It was the story of the Nevilles repeated, but in this instance it was done under the deliberate patronage of the King, and it was noticeable that the majority of these alliances were with those whose families had Lancastrian traditions; in the case of Exeter the father was an attainted exile.

Warwick grew more and more angry as each new marriage was announced, and he retaliated by opposing Edward's foreign policy. During 1465 Louis XI. had been obliged to make considerable concessions to the self-styled League of the Public Weal, an alliance of princes led by the Count of Charolais, which increased his willingness to purchase English support. Warwick favoured his advances, while Edward showed a leaning towards Charolais, who was a more important factor in European politics than the Duke of Burgundy his father Charles the Bold, as he came to be called, possessed the great qualification of being personally hostile to Warwick,² though, strangely enough, when Edward commissioned an embassy intended to draw closer the bonds between himself and the Burgundian House, he chose Warwick to lead it. This embassy was to discuss a commercial treaty with Philip of Burgundy and a double matrimonial alliance with the Count of Charolais, whereby he should marry Edward's sister Margaret, and her brother, George of Clarence, should be contracted to the Count's daughter Mary. As a sop to Warwick he was to be allowed, while abroad, to discuss terms of peace with Louis XI. For the time nothing was concluded, but a secret understanding was signed later in the year between Edward and Charolais, cemented in the summer of

¹ W. of Worcester, 785-786.

² Commissaries, 1. 145

1467 when the Bastard of Burgundy, Charolais' illegitimate brother, came to England, nominally to joust with Rivers' son Lord Scales.¹

The breach between Edward and Warwick was widening perceptibly. Already, it seems, the King had had to intervene to prevent the Earl marrying his daughter to the Duke of Clarence,² and he had thought it wise to dispatch him on an embassy to France while the Bastard of Burgundy was in England. Moreover, the King was making a bid for the support of the nation at large. In the Parliament of 1467 he announced, quite voluntarily, that he intended to "lyve uppon my nowne, and not to charge my subjettes but in grete and urgent causes, concernyng more the wele of theymself, and also the defence of theym and of this my reame, rather than my nowne pleasir".³ To make this possible an act was passed, resuming to the King's use all past gifts of Crown lands, but with such a long list of exemptions as greatly to nullify it. Such a measure had long been favoured by the Commons as the panacea of all the ills of the time. In 1450 "the comones of the parliament long tyme wold not accord upon ony act to be made because they wold that the King shuld resume his demaynes an lyve upon his right and enheritaunce," and in the following year they returned to the charge.⁴ At the second assault they were granted their request, and again in 1453, in 1456, and under Edward IV. in 1461 · but in all cases the exemptions were as important as the resumptions, and the latter were used mainly as a means of penalising opponents. Coming, as did this last act of resumption in 1467, as a direct suggestion from the King, we cannot but believe that Edward was making a bid for support in view of an attack on the Neville influence, more particularly as in this very Parliament the Archbishop of York was deprived of the Chancellorship in favour of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and the French embassy, which Warwick brought back with him from France, was given a very cold reception, despite the very favourable terms of agreement offered by Louis XI.

Finding these repeated slights unbearable, Warwick "toke to hym in fee as many knyghtys, squyers and gentylmenne as he myght, to be strong, and Kyng Edwarde dide that he myght to feble the Erles powere. And yitt thei were acorded diverse tymes:

¹ Foedera, xi. 573-574; *Excerpta Historica*, 171-222.

² Waurin, v. 458-459.

³ Rot. Parl., v. 572.

⁴ *Six Town Chrons.*, 125, 126.

but thei nevere loffyd togedere aftere."¹ As the French envoy in England put it, it was a mere question as to who should be master and who man.² The struggle went on quietly for a time. The betrothal of Margaret to Charles, now Duke of Burgundy, was publicly announced, but Louis XI., co-operating with Warwick, was trying to induce the Pope to refuse the necessary dispensation for consanguinity,³ and Englishmen were ready to lay long odds against the marriage taking place within two years.⁴ Edward was still suspicious of the Clarence-Warwick marriage proposal, and had season to believe that his rival was in communication with the Lancastrians. He even took the precaution to enlist a body-guard of 200 archers for his protection, while the French envoy Monypenny, who was in Warwick's confidence, being accredited indeed more to him than to the King, believed that the Earl was on the point of appealing to the arbitrament of arms.⁵ Not only were 300 archers under a bandit leader ready to rise at a word from him, but already a mob had invaded the Kentish estate of Lord Rivers, and the uncertainty of the political situation was marked by the increase of thefts, homicides, and other grievous wrongs, to which the Speaker drew the King's attention on the adjournment of Parliament in 1467. Believing in the old adage of Aegidius Romanus that "foreign war removes sedition, and makes citizens more united and friendly," Edward announced to the Parliament which he summoned in May, 1468, that he was about to assert his claim to the throne of France by force of arms, "considering the dispasicion of the people of this lond, howe that they must be occupied".⁶ The Commons showed an unusual readiness to vote money, granting as they did two whole subsidies, a strange sequel to Edward's desire to "live of his own".

Beyond a fruitless muster of troops which never sailed nothing was done, for trouble was fast gathering at home. In June, 1468, two persons were hung and one was fined by a special tribunal on the evidence of a captured Lancastrian messenger. At the same time Jasper Tudor landed in Wales, and Margaret herself came to Haifleur with troops raised by permission of Louis XI. but Jasper was defeated by Lord Herbert, who finally captured

¹ Warkworth, 3-4.

² Letter in Waurin (Dupont), iii. 195.

³ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁴ *Paston Letters*, iv. 277.

⁵ Waurin (Dupont), iii. 186-196.

⁶ Rot. Parl., v. 622-623.

the Lancastrian stronghold of Harlech, and received the Earldom of Pembroke as his reward. The Government needed to be ever on the watch, but nothing could guard against the seditious plans of the Nevilles. In June, 1469, the King was making a leisurely tour in the Fen Country when news began to arrive of serious disturbances in the North. In York a popular movement against paying tithe for the support of St Leonard's Hospital had developed into a demand for the restoration of the Earldom of Northumberland to the House of Percy. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that John Neville, the present holder of the title, loyally dispersed the rebels:¹ but another movement was also on foot led by Sir John Conyers, known for the purposes of the rising as "Robin of Redisdale". At first unmoved by such a usual incident, Edward had changed his mind by July 9th, when he sent urgent summonses to Clarence, Warwick, and the Archbishop of York to join him, adding in the case of Warwick "and we ne trust that ye shulde be of any suech disposicion towards us, as the rumour here renneth, consederyng the trust and affeccion we bere in yow".² But rumour spoke true. On July 11th the marriage between Clarence and Isabella Neville, which the King had so strenuously opposed, was celebrated by the Archbishop of York at Calais, and next day the three conspirators issued a manifesto nominally complaining of the King's misrule, but really directed against the faction which surrounded the King, Rivers and his son Scales, Sir John Wydevile "and his brethren," the Earl of Pembroke, Lord Stafford, newly created Earl of Devon, and others who have "estraingid the gret lordis of thayre blood from thaire secrete Councelle".³ The three conspirators at once crossed to England, while the northern rebels were making their way southwards, and Edward, daily expecting Pembroke and Devon to bring up a force of Welsh to his assistance, advanced to Nottingham. All parties were converging on the Midlands, and the Northerners, slipping between the King and his friends, fell in with Pembroke "in a playne byyonde Banbury towne," known as Edgecote Field. Devon having gone off in a huff, the rebels proved entirely victorious over Pembroke, who with his brother Richard was captured and beheaded at Northampton "by the commaundement of the Duke of Clarence and the Erle of

¹ *Brief Latin Chron.*, 183.² *Paston Letters*, v. 35-36.³ Document in Warkworth, 46-51.

Warwyke". Rivers and his son John suffered the same fate at Kenilworth, while Devon fell victim to the mob at Bridgwater in Somerset

Edward fell into his enemies' hands, probably at Olney,¹ near Coventry: but though Warwick owed much of his success to Lancastrian influence, he was hardly prepared to declare for Henry, especially as at least one body of the northern rebels had demanded the eviction of his brother from the Earldom of Northumberland. Moreover, Humphrey Neville, presumably a Lancastrian member of the Westmorland house, rose in arms on the news of Edward's fall, and the men of York only consented to assist in putting down the rising at the price of their King's release.² Burgundy was urging the Londoners to be faithful to his ally, and even Warwick was obviously puzzled what to do with his quasi-captive, for Edward was not the stuff of which willing tools are made. Intrigue and counter-intrigue, of which we know nothing, must have kept every one on the alert, and the summons of several Lords to join the King may have been an attempt of either side to gain supporters. In October the King entered London in some state, accompanied by his faithful brother Gloucester, Suffolk, Arundel, Northumberland, Essex, and other Lords, but he avoided a public reception by making a detour. "The Kyng hymselff hathe good langage of the Lords of Clarence, Warwyk and of my Lords of York (the Archbishop) and of Oxenford, seyng they be hys best frendys; but hys howselde men have other langage, so that what schall hastely falle I cannot seye" The historian of to-day is fain to say with Sir John Paston, "I wot not what to suppose therin"³ It was perhaps a desire for popular support that led Edward to release Henry Percy from the Tower, preparatory to his restoration to the Earldom of Northumberland, while he sought to placate the Nevilles by betrothing his daughter Elizabeth to the present Earl's son, George, who at the same time was created Duke of Bedford. But in December the Duke of Milan's agent in England reported that though Edward had strengthened his position considerably, the struggle between him and Warwick was proceeding as bitterly as ever.⁴ At Christmas an attempt was made to wipe

¹ See Stratford, *Edward IV*, 145-147.

² *Croyland Contin.*, 551-552, Warkworth, 7.

³ *Paston Letters*, v. 62-63. ⁴ Cal. of Venetian Papers, i. 124.

out the past by issuing a full pardon to all guilty of insurrection and sedition, including those responsible for the death of Rivers, and in February the two principals were reported to be "well agreed together".¹ But in February there was "moche to doo" about certain bills placarded by Warwick and Clarence in the London streets, though on March 4th Edward postponed a journey to the North for a friendly meeting with Clarence, after which he rode off to Ware.² The King's destination was Lincolnshire where a rebellion had broken out, but as yet he did not allow his actions to betray any suspicion that his brother and Warwick were implicated therein, though when it was rumoured that the latter was going to accompany his sovereign into Lincolnshire, men shook their heads, "som seye that hys goyng shall doo goode, and som seye that it dothe harme".³

The disturbances in the East had originated in a private quarrel between Lord Welles and Sir Thomas de Burgh, a member of the King's household. When Edward heard that De Burgh's home had been sacked, he thought it sufficient to summon Welles and his associate Sir Thomas Dymock to London, and the fact that they came seems to imply that as yet there was nothing treasonable in their action, nothing more in fact than there had been in the recent private war between the Duke of Norfolk and Sir John Paston over the inheritance of the late Sir John Fastolf. But when it was reported that the King was about to "hang and draw grete noumbre of the comons," the name of "King Harry" began to be heard on the lips of the rebels. Even then Edward was trusting to Clarence and Warwick to bring reinforcements, while really they were intriguing against him, if we are to believe the confession later made by Sir Robert Welles, who now led the insurgents. But suddenly the King ordered the execution of Lord Welles and Dymock, who were with him, and advanced on the rebels, whom he defeated -with such ease "at Empyngham in a felde called Hornefelde," that their hasty flight gave the name of "Lose-coat-field" to the engagement. The commons were spared, though their leaders were executed, including Sir Robert Welles when captured a few days later.⁴ Warwick and Clarence were at once summoned

¹ Cal. of Venetian Papers, i. 125.

² *Chrons of London*, 180.

³ *Paston Letters*, v. 70.

⁴ Contemporary Account and Sir Robert Welles' confession in *Camden Miscellany*, 1. 5-10, 21-23.

to the King's presence, but since they were so far committed, and since "itt was seid that wer never seyn in Inglynd so many goodly men, and so well arreiyed in a feld" as Edward had with him,¹ they fled by way of Southampton to Fiance.

Edward had won a notable victory, but he was far too contemptuous of his enemies, and did not realise that the Earl might not only coquet with the Lancastrians, as he had done lately, but actually throw in his lot with them. It seemed almost incredible that Warwick and Margaret could come together, seeing the sea of blood and the imputations regarding the legitimacy of Prince Edward that lay between them, but they did so. Warwick withdrew all his past imputations on Margaret's honour, and consented to forget his father's and brother's death, and on this basis a mariage was arranged between Warwick's daughter Anne and the Prince of Wales, while Louis promised to provide funds for an invasion of England in the interests of Henry VI. As a sop to Clarence it was agreed that he should succeed to the throne should the Prince and Anne die childless. Burgundy could not make Edward realise his danger, nor distract him from his interest in hunting.² And yet so far as public opinion in England counted at all, it told in favour of the Lancastrians. The relentless cruelty of Edward's constable, Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, had made all men fear that their turn might come next. Recently at Southampton, twenty persons, "gentylmen and yomenne," had not only been hung, drawn, quartered, and beheaded with the usual brutality of the age, but their bodies had been impaled "for the whiche the peple of the londe were gretely displesyd, and evere afterwarde the Earl of Worcestre was gretely behatede emonge the peple for ther dysordinate dethe that he used, contrarye to the lawe of the londe".³ It was not till September 7th that the King realised that "oure ancient enemyes of Fraunce and oure outward rebelles and traitors" were on the point of invading the South.⁴ Six days later Warwick and Clarence landed at Dartmouth, and made their way towards London. They had issued proclamations containing the now time-honoured attacks on a clique surrounding the throne, and making great play with the "tyranny and man-

¹ *Paston Letters*, v. 71.

² *Commissaries*, i. 201, 204-205, Chastellain, v. 468-469, 491-492.

³ Warkworth, 9.

⁴ *Chron. of London*, 181, *Paston Letters*, v. 80, 83.

slaughter" which pervaded the country. Now they proclaimed Henry King Edward's carelessness had been his undoing. For a moment he thought of resistance, but when he heard that John Neville, whom he trusted despite his relationship to Warwick and his loss of the Northumberland title, had deserted, he fled to Lynn, taking ship thence to the Low Countries. Meanwhile, London had been the scene of much disorder, and only the energy of the Mayor subdued the "sanctuary men," and released prisoners, who believed their time had come. Early in October Henry was removed from his cell in the Tower, where he was found poorly clad and "not so clenly kepte as schuld seme suche a Prynce,"¹ and taken to the Bishop of London's palace hard by St Paul's, his usual lodging in the city. For the moment Lancaster had regained the throne.

¹ *Chron. of London*, 182.

CHAPTER XXV

THE CLOSE OF THE MIDDLE AGES
(1470-1485)

H ENRY was once more King, "wheerof alle his goode lovers were fulle glad, and the more part of peple . . ." The Yorkist dynasty had not brought the peace which it promised in 1461. "When Kynge Edwarde IIIIth regnede the peple looked after alle the forseide prosperytes and peece, but it came not, but one batayle aftere another, and moche troble and grett losse of goodes amonge the comone peple."¹ York had been tried and found wanting: Lancaster might have another chance. Such was a contemporary's estimate of the causes which produced Edward's fall, but much also is explained by Warwick's alleged declaration that Edward "resolutely maketh more honorable accountn of new upstart gentlemen than of the ancyent howses of noblytie; whereof either must the noblytie destroy him, or els he wyll destroy them"². This being the spirit which inspired them, it could not be expected that England's new rulers would be popular. Many London citizens remembered that Edward owed them money, and their wives were on the side of the gay and gallant King. There was too a traitor in the camp, in the person of Clarence, who had never quite lost touch with his brother, and who now was secretly listening to the appeals of friends and relatives to return to his allegiance, since "he considered well that hymselfe was had in great suspiccion . . . and hatred with all the lordes, noblemen and oþar that were adherents . . . with Henry".³ He had discovered that he was but a pawn in Warwick's game. The Earl was supreme, not even Queen Margaret was there to dispute his sway, as contray winds, it is said, kept her in France, and his rule was mild, and marked by no

¹ Warkworth, 11-12.² Polydore Vergil, 119.³ *Arrival of King Edward IV.* (Camden Soc., 1838), 9-10.

wholesale executions. Though it is true that the Earl of Worcester was beheaded to the great delight of the populace, Queen Elizabeth, who had taken sanctuary at Westminster, was left unmolested, even being allowed the attendance of Lady Scrope when brought to bed with the future Edward V. A Parliament of sorts was held in November to confirm the agreement of Warwick and Margaret made at Angers, to attaint Edward, and reverse the attainders passed during his reign, but it was such an informal gathering that no record of its meeting appears on the rolls.¹

Lancastrian, or rather Neville, rule hung only by a thread. Edward was not the one to lose heart. Charles of Burgundy had pretended to receive him coldly, but secretly, thanks to the Duchess Margaret, he agreed to help him. True he still disliked the Yorkist house, and had been recently negotiating with Lancastrian envoys, but the Lancastrians were the allies of his enemy of France. Money was raised in various quarters. The merchants of the Staple at Calais considered a loan a good investment,² and on March 2nd, 1471, Edward set sail with about five hundred Englishmen and as many "Duchemen". On the 14th he landed at Ravenspur in Yorkshire, the very spot, as the Yorkist chroniclers joyfully noted, that many years ago the "usurper" Henry IV. had come to shore. By way of York and Pontefract he marched southwards. "As to the folks of the countrey there came but right few to hym, or almost none," and similarly "the people of the countrie, whiche in greate nombar, and in dyvars placis were gatheryd and in harnes redye to resiste him in chalenginge of the Royme and the crowne, were disposyd to content themselfe, and in noo wyse to annoy ne his fellowshipe, they affirmynge that to such entente were they comen, and none other." Hull refused him admission, York only received him on the plea that he came to recover his duchy and not the throne, and though a few joined his camp at Wakefield, they were "not so many as he supposed wolde have comen". It was the same old story, the commons would acclaim the victor, but while the issue was in doubt they were careful not to commit themselves. Montague, in command of an army in the North, made no attempt to crush the invaders, but Warwick rushed to raise his standard in the Midlands, and from Warwick Castle summoned his supporters. "Henry I pray you ffayle me

¹ Lansdowne MS. 511, ff. 73-74; Warkworth, 12-13.

² Foedera, xi. 792.

not now, as ever I may do ffor yow," he wrote with his own hand at the bottom of one of these official letters.¹ As the enemy advanced he shut himself in Coventry, while the traitor Clarence joined his brother at Banbury. Edward now made for London, but it was not till April 10th that he seized the Tower, nor till the following day that he was admitted to the City, many of the poorer citizens being opposed to such a course.² Having captured the unfortunate Henry and his guardian Archbishop Neville, he proceeded to Westminster to meet his wife, who placed his newly born son and heir in his arms. He spent the following day, which happened to be Good Friday, maturing his plans. Warwick, now advancing on London, hoped to take the Yorkists unawares, but on the morrow Edward marched out of the city to meet his enemy and erstwhile friend for the last time.

In the dark of Easter Eve Edward led his men close to the enemy as they lay near Barnet, and all night Warwick's guns bombarded what they vainly imagined was the enemy, who lay far nearer than they thought. On the morrow the battle began a break of day, a thick mist enveloping the field, and concealing from both commanders that their right wings overlapped the left of their opponents. Oxford on the Lancastrian right drove Hastings, who was opposed to him, from the field, but this spread neither dismay among the Yorkists nor joy among the Lancastrians, as the fog hid each division from the other. Unable to keep his men in hand, Oxford could not return to the assistance of his fellows for some time, and when he did so the fight hung in the balance. Gloucester on the Yorkist right had been as successful as Oxford, but he had not left the field, and both he and his brother Edward were pressing the combined centre and left wings of the Lancastrians when some of Oxford's men returned. Having lost their way in the fog, they appeared at the rear of their friends, who, mistaking them for a Yorkist outflanking party, broke and fled. Montague was slain, Warwick fell in trying to make his escape, while Edward lost Lords Cromwell and Say with Sir Humphrey Bourchier. Contrary to usual practice no indignities were offered to the vanquished dead, though the bodies of Warwick and Montague were exposed to popular gaze before burial, that

¹ Hist MSS Report xii, part iv. 3-4.

² For the whole advance see *Arrival of Edward*, 1-17. Cf. Warkworth, 13-15.

all might see that the disturber of England's peace was dead. Before the day was well advanced Edward entered London in triumph.¹ On the very day that Barnet was fought Margaret landed at Weymouth, where she was met by Devon and Somerset, who encouraged her to persevere despite the recent disaster.² Forces having been raised in Devon and Cornwall, two alternatives faced the leaders. They might adopt the bold course of advancing on London, or try to form a junction with Jasper Tudor in Wales, and move to the North. They decided on the latter, though making a feint towards Salisbury, which did not deceive Edward, who hurried West to intercept them before they should cross the Severn. At Cirencester, on April 29th, he learnt that they were expected at Bath, but instead they fell back on Bristol. Having refreshed themselves there, they advanced towards Gloucester, and managed to evade Edward, who only came up with their rear-guard at Chipping Sodbury on May 1st. Early next morning he learnt that the enemy were making for the Gloucester bridge over the Severn, and having sent strict injunctions to the governor of that town to admit no one, he gave chase. The Lancastrians, denied an entry into Gloucester, pushed on, weary and disappointed, till they reached Tewkesbury, where they encamped in a strong position on a ridge to the south of the town. In that position Edward attacked them on May 4th. At first he could make no impression, but when Somerset, in command of the right, brought his men down from their coign of vantage, Gloucester, in command of the King's left wing, threw himself on the enemy, and Edward came to his brother's assistance, as the rest of the Lancastrian host still retained its defensive position. Somerset was thus taken in the front and on his left flank, while a body of 200 spears stationed in the woods on the Yorkist left threw itself on his right. The Yorkists drove the enemy before them, and taking Somerset's original position, attacked the remaining Lancastrians. With their retreat largely cut off by the Avon at their rear, the Lancastrians were at the mercy of Yorkist fury. Wenlock in the centre fell a victim to Somerset's anger at not being supported,³ Devon, in command of the left, was slain. Margaret's son Edward was

¹ *Arrival of Edward, 18-21, Warkworth, 15-17.*

² *Arrival of Edward, 22-23, Warkworth, 17*

³ The Duke, after rejoining the main body, slew Wenlock with his own hand.

"taken and slain," and some days later she herself was captured, and Somerset and many others were taken and executed Tewkesbury had completed what Barnet had begun.¹

Edward was now in complete command of the country, save for a little restlessness in the North, checked by Northumberland's open acceptance of the Yorkist victories, and for an attack on London from the South. The Bastard of Fauconbridge, a cousin and supporter of Warwick, sent a letter on May 8th demanding a passage across London Bridge to enable him to join his kinsman, to which answer was made by the civic authorities that Warwick was dead, and more, that the Lancastrian cause had definitely fallen at Tewkesbury. Under the circumstances the Londoners knew that they were quite safe in refusing to admit the Bastard within their walls, and after a vain assault, he and his men dispersed. But the incident reveals how carefully the citizens watched the struggle in which they did not participate, for on May 9th they were able to give a list of those killed at Tewkesbury five days earlier, thanks to special war correspondents sent to both armies.² Edward entered London on May 21st, and next morning Henry's dead body was exposed to view. That he was murdered there is no doubt, even in face of the official statement that the ex-King had died "of pure displeasure and melancholy,"³ but the report that the deed was done by Gloucester is probably merely a story inspired by a knowledge of the Duke's later actions. From this time Edward's command of the kingdom was never seriously threatened. In 1472 Archbishop Neville, being suspected of correspondence with exiled Lancastrians, was arrested and imprisoned at the Castle of Hames, near Calais, where he spent all but the last few weeks of his life. In the following year rumours of signs and portents betokening war were reported from various parts of the country,⁴ the general uneasiness was complicated by a visitation of plague, and one Hogan was cast into the Tower for setting himself up as the prophet of tribulation.⁵ But nothing worse came of all these fears than a de-

¹ The best modern account of the campaign and battle is by Canon Bazeley in *Proceedings of Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, xxvi. 173-193.

² Letters in *Archæologia Cantiana*, xi. 359-363.

³ *Arrival of Edward*, 38. King Henry's bones were examined in their coffin at Windsor in 1911, and medical evidence is said to be in favour of his having died a violent death. The back of the skull was crushed and there was blood in the hair.

⁴ Warkworth, 24.

⁵ *Paston Letters*, v. 179, 181.

scent of the Earl of Oxford on the southern coast in May, and his seizure of St Michael's Mount in September. In February, 1474, he was compelled to surrender.

Edward's danger lay within his own house. His brother Gloucester was anxious to marry Anne Beauchamp, daughter of the King-maker and widow of Edward Prince of Wales, much to the indignation of Clarence, who counted on securing the whole Neville inheritance. The latter even went so far as to spirit the lady away in the guise of a kitchen wench, but Gloucester discovered her hiding-place, and the two brothers fought the matter out before the King in February, 1472. At length Clarence grudgingly agreed that Gloucester "may weel have my Ladye hys suster in lawe, butt they schall parte no lyvelod, as he seth".¹ Edward tried to soothe his angry brother with gifts, but the great question of the inheritance was still unsettled. In November it was reported that "the Duke off Claranc makyth hym bygge in that he kan, schewyng as he wolde but dele with the Duke of Gloucester," though the King was doing his utmost to promote concord.² At length in 1474 an agreement was reached whereby the King-maker's estates were divided between Clarence and Gloucester, while their unfortunate mother-in-law the Countess of Warwick was deprived of everything, including her jointure. Unfortunately this partial defeat did not deter Clarence from his course of factiousness and disorder. After the death of his wife in December, 1476, his sister Margaret, who ever had a warm corner in her heart for him, suggested her step-daughter Mary, heiress to the Burgundian inheritance, as his second wife, and it was said that Queen Elizabeth put forward her brother Lord Rivers in opposition. Both suggestions were opposed by Edward,³ who also probably scented an intrigue in a suggestion made by James III of Scotland that Clarence should marry his sister Margaret.⁴ Considering himself slighted by his brother, the Duke seized an unfortunate attendant of his late wife, and dragging her off to Warwick, used his influence to secure her condemnation for having compassed the murder of the late Duchess by poison. The matter was complicated by the arrest of a certain John Stacy on a charge of sorcery, and his confession that one Thomas Burdet, a friend and confidant of the Duke, was also

¹ *Paston, Letters*, v. 135-136; *Croyland Contin.*, 557. ² *Paston Letters*, v. 195.

³ *Croyland Contin.*, 561.

⁴ *Halliwell, Letters*, i. 147.

implicated. The two men were tried and executed on a charge of trying to procure the death of the King and his son by magic, presumably in the interests of Clarence.¹ It may be that this prosecution was meant by Edward as a warning to his brother, or that the trial revealed seditious plans conceived by Clarence against the King and his heir. At any rate Clarence took the proceedings as a personal attack, and appeared before the Privy Council to lodge a protest at what he claimed was a judicial murder. Edward could brook no further interference, and summoning his brother to his presence, had him arrested. He at once summoned a Parliament, before which in January, 1478, he laid a long indictment against the Duke, recounting his past treacheries which had been forgiven, his recent action in discrediting royal justice, his alleged accusations of bastardy brought against the King, and his preparations for an immediate rising. Such witnesses as were called behaved more like prosecutors than witnesses, and the inevitable bill of attainder having been passed, a specially constituted tribunal condemned the prisoner to death.² We have no method of testing the truth of the charges thus brought forward, but it is a strange commentary on the age that such a double-dyed traitor should have enjoyed immunity so long, and that a chronicler was found to champion him. Before his sentence could be passed he was dead. If, as the current report had it, he was drowned in a butt of Malmsey wine, it was too sweet an end for such a contemptible life.

To contemporaries it appeared that by Clarence's death Edward had set the coping-stone on absolute despotism. "Many persons left the King fully persuaded that he would be able to lord it over the whole kingdom at his will and pleasure, all those idols being now removed, towards the faces of whom the eyes of the multitude, ever desirous of change, had been in the habit of turning in times past. They regarded as idols of this description the Earl of Warwick, the Duke of Clarence, and any other great person then in the kingdom, who had withdrawn himself from the King's intimacy"³. In other words, Edward refused to allow the "too powerful subject", he would not tolerate the anarchy which the events of recent years had encouraged. Seeing that Lancastrian constitutionalism

¹ Dep. Keeper's Rep. iii. App. ii. 213-214, *Croyland Contin.*, 561.

² *Croyland Contin.*, 561-562, Rot. Parl., vi. 193-195.

³ *Croyland Contin.*, 562.

had played into the hands of a turbulent aristocracy, he tried to establish a strong despotism such as the Tudors ultimately achieved. Parliaments were less frequent than of yore, and their work extended little beyond the granting of supplies. It was probably as true of this body as of Convocation, that whatsoever the King desired had to be done.¹ Such legislation as was passed was largely of a social and economic character. Thus the ideas of the time were illustrated by a prohibition to export money abroad, save for the payment of ransom and the expenses incurred by ambassadors. At the same time legislation of a more permanent character forbade the sale of golden articles which did not reach an 18-carat standard, or of silver under the currency standard, it being necessary that the last should bear the hall-mark of the crowned Leopard's head. The jurisdiction of Piepowder courts was limited strictly in time and place to the fair for which each was constituted, and regulations were made for the comparatively new industry of tile-making. Still more interesting was the dislike of time-saving machinery, evidenced by the prohibition of the use of a newly invented fulling-mill, which would "fulle and thikke" more caps in one day than fourscore men working "by hand and fote". Previous sumptuary legislation was re-enacted in the interests of home manufacture, as diess had become "more inordynate, excessive and outeragious" than ever.²

Edward was his own master and kept the management of the kingdom entirely in his own hands. Nothing was too small for him to commit to memory, and he showed a wide knowledge of local detail whenever he went up and down his kingdom.³ He had always chosen his own friends, who were now selected more from the middle class than from the old aristocracy that wrought such trouble to England. Thus when hunting at Waltham he would invite the Mayor and certain citizens of London to join him in his sport, and provide them with an elaborate feast laid in a "plesaunt logge of grene bowhis," where they partook of "aswell seasoned mete as it had been dressed in a stondyng place," together with "wyne cowched, reed, whyte, and claret whereof they had good plentye".⁴ At the same time he kept a strong hand on the nobility, and did not

¹ *Croyland Contin.*, 563

² Rot. Parl., vi 187-190, 220-221, Statutes, ii 457-470.

³ *Croyland Contin.*, 564

⁴ *Chrons. of London*, 189.

hesitate to order the Earl of Pembroke to adopt the title of Huntingdon, and to exchange his lordships of Tenby and Pembroke for lands in Somerset and Dorset, where there would be no tradition of loyalty to the Herbert family. His most trustworthy servants were scattered over the kingdom, as keepers of castles, manors, forests, and parks, so that all who threatened the stability of his government might be apprehended at once¹. His justice was stern but not revengeful: even his own servants were sacrificed if necessary, and this alone helped him to retain his hold over the country when men began to grumble at "the unfair management of the resources of the kingdom in consequence of such quantities of treasure being abstracted from the coffers of each". Edward, like Henry VII later, realised that to be strong he must be wealthy. To this end he furbished up the rusty machinery of fiscal administration "Throughout all parts of the kingdom he appointed inspectors of the customs, men of remarkable shrewdness, but too hard, it was said, upon the merchants". He seized the revenues of vacant prelacies, "which according to Magna Carta could not be sold," and obliged "the newly appointed bishops to redeem them at a price". "He also examined the registers and rolls of Chancery, and from those whom he found to have entered on their inheritances without establishing their rights by legal process he exacted heavy fines, by way of return for the rents which they had received". By these and similar methods, such as could not be conceived by any inexperienced person, did he fill his treasury.² He signalled his restoration by appointing commissioners to try all who had been implicated with the Bastard of Fauconbridge in attacking London, with instructions to fine rather than hang. Accordingly they "satt uppone alle Kent, Sussex and Essex that were at the Blakhethe, and uppone many othere that were not there, for some manne payed CC marke, some a C pownde, and some more and some lesse, so that it coste the porest manne VIIIs whiche was not worthe so myche, but was fayne to selle such clothinge as thei hade, and borowede the remanent, and laborede for it aftyrwarde; and so the Kynge hade out of Kent myche goode and lytelle luff".³ Further, forced loans were levied during 1471-1472 from the bishops, knights, and merchants for large sums, which were only repaid in one or two instances. These were to all intents the same as the "bene-

¹ *Croyland Contin.*, 562.

² *Ibid.*, 559.

³ Warkworth, 22

volences" of a later period of the reign, described as a "new and unheard of impost—that every man should give by way of benevolence that which he wished, or rather which he did not wish to give".¹ In 1474, wrote a Londoner, "the Kyng called before hym the Mayr and severally the Aldermen, and by fair meanes cawsid them to gyve hym a certayn money toward his viage in to ffraunce . . . And so in like wyse he sent for all the thryfty Comoners of the Cite . . . And after this he went and sent abowte all the land, whereby he Raysed moche good ; and this was called a Benyvolence".² It was an arbitrary system, and it meant, if practised with consistency, the death of all parliamentary powers. but it was probably a far more equitable system than any parliamentary tax could be, as many escaped with small or no contributions to ordinary subsidies.³ To enrich himself the King was not too proud to enter the ranks of the merchants himself "Having procured merchant ships, he put on board of them the finest wools, cloths, tin, and other productions of the kingdom, and, like one of those who live by trade, did exchange merchandise for merchandise by means of his agents both among Italians and Greeks".⁴ Despite the splendour of his Court and his delight in costly trappings, he was the first English King for many a long year to die free of debt.

Edward's financial policy was that of the careful and not over-principled merchant, and some said that these same qualities appeared in his foreign policy. From the first days of the restoration he showed a desire to revenge himself on France for the support given to Warwick, though a short truce was signed for the time being. Every possible step was taken to strengthen friendly relations with other powers, such as Castile, Portugal, Brittany, and above all Burgundy, who had given valuable help in time of need. With Scotland negotiations brought about an amicable settlement of difficulties regarding the infringement of the truce between the two countries. Friendship was also sought with the Hanseatic League, that confederation of North German towns which was still a power to be counted with in Europe. Quarrels between the English and Hansa merchants had been frequent in the past, but disagreements dating from 1468 were removed in 1473. Moreover, the League secured the confirmation of all its past privileges,

¹ *Croyland Contin.*, 558.

² *Chrons. of London*, 186.

* *Rot. Parl.*, vi. 116.

⁴ *Croyland Contin.*, 559.

which in certain instances placed its members in a more favoured position as to the custom duties than even native traders. In addition it received a definite grant of the Steel Yard, as its depot in London, and similar places at Lynn and Boston, all concessions which must have tried the loyalty of the King's commercial subjects to the utmost.¹

It was in the Parliament of 1472 that the earliest definite announcement was made of the King's intention to invade France, and money was granted for the purpose. Again in 1474 the Commons were coerced into voting more money, and to add to this again in the following year. By 1475 Edward was ready to begin hostilities, but "Things go slowly in England," wrote Commynes, "for the King cannot undertake such an enterprise without assembling his Parliament . . . for there are no aids raised in England save for expeditions to France or Scotland or such-like expenses and right willingly and liberally do they grant them, especially for a French expedition."² Already small forces had been put in commission to help Burgundy and Brittany against their overlord, and a definite offensive alliance had been signed between Edward and Charles, when during May and June, 1475, the English army was conveyed to Calais. From the first Edward was doomed to disappointment. The Duke of Brittany showed no signs of moving, and all Burgundy's wiles could not conceal the fact that his army had been rendered totally useless by his recent unsuccessful siege of Neuss. There were many in the English host who clamoured to return, but Edward held on his way through Burgundian territory, where his army was more than coldly received. Some of the English managed to get a message through to Louis, suggesting that he should offer terms, and Edward ultimately consented to accept the sum of 75,000 crowns down, and an annual tribute of 50,000 crowns from the French, at the same time agreeing to a treaty of friendship for seven years, to be cemented by a marriage between one of his daughters and the Dauphin. An amicable meeting was arranged between the two Kings at Picquigny, after which Edward retired to Calais and thence to England. Sir John Paston probably voiced the feeling of many when he wrote from Calais to his mother

¹ *Chron. of London*, 180, *Foedera*, xi. 739-740, 765-767, 779-782, 793-803; *Rot. Parl.*, vi. 65-69, 123-124.

² *Commynes*, i. 266-267.

"blessyd be God, thys wyage of the Kynges is fynsshed for thys tyme,"¹ but Gloucester and many others had ostentatiously absented themselves from the meeting at Picquigny to show their disapproval.² There was a feeling abroad that Edward had sold the country's honour for a pension but the nation might well have acknowledged gratefully that the absurd Plantagenet claims to the French throne had been tacitly set aside, and the English coast secured against French attack. If some grumbled, it was because they did not understand so well as Edward that commercialism was rapidly ousting chivalry from the domain of international politics.

Edward's later foreign policy was not successful. So far as the Continent was concerned the whole aspect of affairs was changed by the death of Charles the Bold in January, 1477. Louis XI. immediately seized certain Burgundian territories, but he was defeated in his desire to get Charles's heiress for a bridegroom of his own choosing by her marriage to Maximilian, King of the Romans, the son of the Emperor Frederick III., a match which Edward encouraged. Louis and Maximilian now found themselves in bitter rivalry, and both were eager for Edward's assistance, but the English King failed to take advantage of this situation, and in 1482 he had the mortification of seeing the two rivals in alliance and a repudiation by France of her obligation to pay tribute. The declining years of Edward's reign also witnessed a renewal of disagreement with Scotland, provoked perhaps by a desire to recover Berwick. In 1479 we find him sending a mission to treat with the Scottish Government, and at the same time entertaining in London a herald of the Earl of Ross, who was a constant danger to the peace of that realm.³ In May, 1480, the appointment of Gloucester to command an army to repel a possible incursion from Scotland marked the definite beginning of a warlike policy, and in June the Scots crossed the Border, and again in September. In March, 1481, men were raised in the northern counties for a "viage into Scotland"; the Scots were also mobilised, and in May Edward explained to the Pope that he was about to lead an army into Scotland to punish his "perfidious neighbours" who had provoked him to arm.⁴ Of course James III declared that it was the English, not he, who had provoked the war. In 1482 Edward went so far as to acknow-

¹ *Paston Letters*, v. 237.

² *Commissaries*, i. 319 320.

³ Bain, *Cal of Documents*, iv. 296.

⁴ *Cal of Venetian Papers*, i. 142.

ledge James's exiled brother, the Duke of Albany, as King of the Scots, in return for a recognition of English suzerainty and the surrender of Berwick and other places. Gloucester was again appointed to command an army of invasion, which reached York about July,¹ and after a six weeks' campaign recaptured Berwick, the last event of note in the reign, for on April 9th, 1483, the King died.

Edward had done a great work. Coming to the throne as the mere nominee of a faction, he had fought hard for the mastery, and despite reverses, he had managed to restore the majesty of the Crown, and thereby reduce the country to order. England in his latter days was not perhaps the home of quiet, but at least it could be said of him that "he appeared to be dreaded by all his subjects, while himself feared no man."² Not for the first time in English history a King's selfishness had proved the salvation of his people.

Unfortunately the stern rule established by Edward IV. could not be carried on by his twelve year old son and heir Edward V., and the rivalries, suppressed for a time, broke forth with increased vigour. Even before Edward IV.'s death there had been signs of a growing opposition to the Wydeviles, who, strong in brains if not in actual power, were led by the Queen, her brother Lord Rivers, and her son Thomas Grey, Marquis of Dorset. Grasping and unconciliatory, they were immensely unpopular, partly because they were upstarts, partly, perhaps, because they showed an interest in intellectual matters. Just as Humphrey Duke of Gloucester was suspect as a patron of Renaissance scholars, so was Rivers worse than criminal in the eyes of the English nobility as a poet whose work was printed by Caxton.³ The very first Council of Edward V.'s reign was the scene of a struggle between the Wydeviles and their opponents, both sides being Yorkist but none the less hostile. The matter in dispute was the size of the retinue which should accompany the new King when he came up to London, as his "governour" was Rivers, and his household largely chosen from members of the Queen's family. Lord Hastings, a faithful follower of Edward IV., declared he would retire to Calais, of which he was governor, if a moderate retinue were not insisted on, a sinister threat in view of

¹ *York Records*, 128-132.

² *Croyland Contin.*, 562.

³ Rous, 213-214; J. Ritson, *Ancient Songs* (London, 1877), II. 149-151.

the part Calais had played in the past, but the Queen was induced to write to her son suggesting a retinue of not more than 2000, a number acceptable to Hastings, who believed that his friends Gloucester and Buckingham could muster an equal number.¹

It is evident that the opposition to the Wydeviles centred from the first in Gloucester, who was at the time absent in the North. It is almost impossible to fathom the true character of this inscrutable man. During Edward IV.'s reign his conduct had been straightforward and honourable. Disliking the Treaty of Picquigny, he had not made that an excuse for intrigues, and his quarrel with Clarence was not of his own seeking. Of late he had been building up a reputation as a soldier in the campaigns against Scotland, and in the North he commanded considerable influence, so much so that in York taverns they discussed the prospects of candidates for the mayoralty in relation to his wishes². It may be that Edward IV had had some misgivings of his brother latterly, for in November, 1482, he had taken from him the office of Constable, but on the other hand we are told that on his death-bed he desired to transfer the care of his heir from Rivers to this self-same brother³. Gloucester's first actions on hearing of Edward IV.'s death were strictly correct. He at once wrote to the Queen to assure her of his loyalty to her son, and attended a Requiem Mass for the dead at York, after which he swore allegiance to his new sovereign and exacted similar oaths from the nobility present. Loyalty to his nephew and hostility to the Wydevile party were not incompatible, and Gloucester was doubtless already determined to assert himself as the power behind the throne. As he journeyed southwards he met the Duke of Buckingham, a hitherto inconspicuous peer, who had married the Queen's sister, and might therefore have been suspected of Wydevile sympathies. He seems, however, to have come to some understanding with Gloucester, for at once he proceeded to help him in his plans to get the King into his power. To Northampton also came Rivers and his half-brother Sir Richard Grey to pay their respects to Gloucester, they also being on their way to London as escort to Edward V., whom they

¹ *Croyland Contin.*, 564-565; *Grants of Edward V.*, pp. vii-viii; *Chron. of London*, 189-190.

² *York Records*, 140-141.

³ Bernard André in *Memorials of Henry VII.* (Rolls Series, 1858) 23.

had left resting at Stony Stratford. Next morning all four magnates rode to join the King, but on the way Rivers and Grey were arrested, and though every respect was shown the King, his maternal relatives were removed from his entourage, Rivers and Grey being sent prisoners to the North. When the news reached London, the Queen fled to sanctuary at Westminster with her remaining children, and the two sides began to muster their forces, the Wydeviles at Westminster, and the friends of Gloucester round Hastings in the city.¹ It seems very probable that Gloucester was here acting on a pre-conceived plan, that Hastings, Buckingham, and himself had arranged the matter before the late King's death, which may explain why Hastings at once took exception to the King being accompanied to London by a large retinue.

On May 4th Gloucester and the King entered London, being met with due solemnity by the Mayor and Aldermen, who noticed that the former was dressed in mourning, and public opinion began to show itself decidedly against the Wydeviles, especially when it was declared that in their captured baggage were found large quantities of arms and accoutrements of war, evidence, it was believed, of their desire to obtain the government by a *coup d'état*. Gloucester's first action was to get himself appointed Protector, and forthwith he placed his friends in the chief offices of the kingdom, and in command of the royal castles. But Dorset and Sir Edward Wydevile were at sea, assuming a threatening attitude with certain ships they had collected, and there was great tension between the two parties in London. On June 10, or 11th, Gloucester wrote to Lord Neville of the Westmorland House and to his friend the Mayor of York for military assistance, "ayanst the Quiene, hir blode adherentts and affinitie, which have intended, an daly doith intend to murder and utterly distroy us and our cousyn the duc of Bukkyngham, and the old royll blode of this realme".² Subsequent events suggest that this marks the time when Richard determined to seize the throne, and that his allusion to the "blood royal," as contrasted with the Queen's "blode adherentts," foreshadowed his assertion that Edward V. was no true son of Edward IV. To this end he proceeded to remove those

¹ *Croyland Contin.*, 565-566, *Polydore Vergil*, 174-175; *Chron. of London*, 190.

² *Paston Letters*, vi. 71-72, *York Records*, 148-150.

who might stand in his way, prominent among whom was Hastings, who may have been growing uneasy at the turn of events. On June 13th he entered the chamber in the Tower where a portion of the Council was sitting, and ordered Hastings to immediate execution on a charge of plotting against him. Three days later the Queen was frightened or cajoled into surrendering her younger son Richard, who was removed to the Tower, whither his brother Edward had been sent some weeks earlier.¹ Everything was now ready for the usurpation of the throne. On Sunday, June 22nd, a certain Doctor Shaw was put up to preach at Paul's Cross "that Kyng Edwarde's children wer not ryghtful enheritours unto the crowne, but that the Duke of Glowcetir's title was bettir than thers". Two days later Buckingham suggested to a meeting held at the Guildhall that Gloucester should be called on to assume the Crown.² If we can believe a later writer, the citizens manifested a profound apathy in face of this propaganda. At Paul's Cross on Sunday it had been arranged that Gloucester should appear amongst the crowd just as Shaw reached the climax of his sermon so that the people might be swept away by their enthusiasm and acclaim Richard king. But the Duke missed his cue, and the crowd watched him come and go in dead silence. Buckingham's speech on the Tuesday was similarly received, till some Yorkist retainers were drafted into the back of the hall to raise the cry of "King Richard".³ The average Englishman was quite willing to assent to any revolution, but without enthusiasm. He understood the dangers of a minority, and accepted as a legitimate argument the armed men already mustered by the Protector, and the still greater number expected shortly.

Though Parliament had been summoned to meet on June 25th, the summons had been cancelled, and it was an informal Convention that met on the appointed day and drew up a petition asking Richard to assume the Crown. So far as legitimate succession was concerned, it asserted that Edward's marriage was invalid, thanks to a pre-contract in his early youth to Lady Eleanor Talbot, daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury, on the other hand, it based its action on the despotism of the late King, whereby "the ordre of all poletique

¹ *Excerpta Historica*, 16-17, *Croyland Contin.*, 566.

² *Chron. of London*, 190-191, *Fabyan*, 669.

³ *More, Richard III*, 63-74.

rule was perverted, the Lawes of God and of God's Church, and also the Lawes of Nature and of Englund, and also the laudable customes and Liberties of the same " were " broken, subverted and contempned . . . so that this Land was ruled by selfewill and pleasure ". Finally it emphasised the fact that Richard was called on to reign both by rightful succession and by the election of the estates of the realm.¹ Richard and his advisers were guilty of a gross error of judgment in thus allowing discredit to be thrown on Edward IV's strong government, and in subscribing to this reversion to Lancastrian constitutionalism. It was a course which must almost inevitably drive the nation back into anarchy, and reveals Richard not as a Yorkist fighting for his House, but as an adventurer decked in a parti-coloured garment of Yorkist claims and Lancastrian tradition.

Richard III assumed the Crown on June 26th, and from that day to his death on Bosworth Field, a period of just over two years, he knew no peace. Soon after his splendid coronation " he fyll in great hatrede of the more partie of the nobles of his realme, insomuche that suche as before louyd and praysed hym, and wolde haue iuparted lyfe and good with hym if he had remayned styll as protectoure, now murmuryd and grudgyd agayne hym in suche wyse, that fewe or none fauouryd his partie, except it were for diede or for the great gyttes that they receyuyd of hym. By meane whereof he wanne dyuers to folowe his mynde, the whiche after deceyued hym."² The most notable instance of his desertion by erstwhile friends occurred within three months of the coronation. At that ceremony none had been more splendidly arrayed than the Duke of Buckingham, who posed as a second King-maker ;³ on October 11th the King was asking for " men defensibley arrased on horsbak," since " the duc of Bukiham traiterously is turned upon us, contrary to the duete of hys liggeance ".⁴ Richard had some reason to describe his recent friend as one " that hadde best cawse to be trewe . . . the most untiewe creatur lyvynge . . . Ther was never false traytor bettei purvayde for."⁵ Well rewarded for his services, he could not put Richard's cruelty forward as an excuse for his treachery, since he had raised no protest at the execution of Hastings, or later of Rivers and

¹ Rot. Parl., vi. 240-241.

² Fabian, 670.

³ Rous, 216.

⁴ *York Records*, 177.

⁵ Ellis *Letters*, 2nd Series, i. 160.

Grey Nor could he complain of oppressive government, for Richard had not only refused the offer of benevolences in several instances, but had remitted certain dues to the city of York "On my trouth," wrote the Bishop of St. David's, "I lykyd never the condicions of ony prince so wel as his; God hath sent hym to us for the wele of us al."¹ With Buckingham it was the case of the King-maker over again. His loyalty having been undermined by the subtle conversation of John Morton, Bishop of Ely, a prisoner since the Hastings affair and lately in his charge, he was quite ready to co-operate when sedition was organised by those who had been compelled to take sanctuary in London and the men of the Kentish Weald. With the avowed object of liberating the two Princes in the Tower, the movement soon spread through all the southern shires, and it was then that Buckingham was proclaimed its leader.

When it was rumoured that the young prisoners were both dead,² the insurgents prepared to proclaim Henry Earl of Richmond king, and to strengthen his claim by marrying him to the Princess Elizabeth. Money was sent over by Richmond's mother, the Lady Margaret, communication was established with the ex-Queen, though guards were posted at every approach to the Westminster sanctuary, and a conjuration of considerable magnitude was set on foot. Richmond had long since been considered a danger to the Yorkist dynasty. Through his mother he was heir to the Beaufort claims to the throne, since she was the daughter of the Duke of Somerset who died in 1444. From his father he inherited the Richmond Earldom, and he claimed relationship with the House of Valois through his grandmother, the widow of Henry V. He was thus the representative of Lancastrian claims to the throne, and as such Edward IV. had made more than one attempt to secure his person from the Duke of Brittany, in whose dominions he had found an asylum. On this occasion, however, the plot developed too quickly for Richmond to co-operate effectively. When he arrived off Plymouth he found that Richard's promptitude, combined with the heavy rain which had swollen the Severn, had prevented the junction of the forces Buckingham had raised at Brecon with the insurgents in the south-west. The whole movement collapsed

¹ *Christ Church Letters* (Camden Soc., 1877), 46.

² *Croyland Contin.*, 567-568; *Paston Letters*, vi. 72.

Buckingham, fleeing for safety, was delivered up to the King he had deserted and suffered a traitor's death. But Richard's position was rudely shaken. It was reported that he had had his two nephews murdered in the Tower "for whiche cause he lost the her tes of the people".¹ Whether it was a cold-blooded deed, conceived in the spirit which induced Turkish Sultans to murder their relatives in batches, or whether it was the result of a sudden decision, taken when rebels talked of releasing the boys, the "deth of the Innocentes,"² together with the Buckingham insurrection, marked a turning-point in the reign.

Even if, as seems probable, Richard had at first intended to reform abuses and introduce more effective government, now his one aim was to hold that which he had seized. However, the Parliament of January, 1484, was allowed to concern itself with the regulation of trade and commerce, foreshadow the Statute of Uses, and above all condemn the "newe and unlawfull invencion" of Benevolences.³ But all this was obviously a bid for popularity, for the nation's apathy with regard to the quarrels of princes was giving place to an intense desire for good and substantial government. The very fact that Richard was not so strongly established as he had seemed to be struck his death-knell. Disaffection was still rampant, and the King's financial position had been weakened by the late revolt.⁴ In vain he made a bold bid for Lancastrian support by translating the remains of Henry VI. to Windsor, in vain he showered favours on those whose opposition he feared, in vain he induced Queen Elizabeth to come out of sanctuary with her daughters and thus give a certain sanction to his position, in vain he provoked a conflict with Scotland, in that ever-foolish hope that a war might pull the nation together. Seditious talk was in the air, and a certain William Collingbourne paid with his life for circulating the couplet:—

The catte, the ratte, an Lovell our dogge
Rulyth all Englande under a hogge

"The whiche was ment that Catisby, Ratclyffe and the lorde Lovell ruled the lande under the Kynge, which bare the whyte bore for his conysaunce".⁵ In desperation, it is said, Richard con-

¹ *Chron. of London*, 191.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Statutes*, II. 477-478, 480-497.

⁴ *Croyland Contin.*, 570.

⁵ *Fabyan*, 672.

tempted an incestuous marriage with his niece Elizabeth, to avert her suggested union with Richmond. At the Christmas festivities of 1484, the lady appeared "arrayed like a second queen," and men began to whisper darkly that the King was preparing to put away his wife to be able to marry her. When Queen Anne died in March, portents in the heavens seemed to accuse her husband of poisoning her, and public opinion was such that in April Richard was obliged to deny the "false and abominable langage and lyes" which were being circulated about him¹. As a last desperate effort he began to scatter bribes among the nobility and gentry, but this only injured him the more, for the money had to be raised by forced loans, which though they were not technically Benevolences, contravened the recent statute in spirit, and alienated the sympathies of the nation yet more.

Richmond's time was coming. From the first Richard had tried to induce the Duke of Brittany to withdraw his assistance from the English refugees, and had found him ready enough with fair words, but so far as Richmond was concerned only anxious to use him as a lever to obtain English help against the King of France, and in default ready to provide him with money to join with Buckingham. When, in June, 1484, Brittany agreed to a truce with England, Richmond turned to Charles VIII, the new King of France, from whom he obtained a certain amount of money, and permission to raise 3000 men in Normandy, who turned out to be mainly ragamuffins². Feverish precautions against invasion were taken in England during the last days of 1484, as seditious reports were being circulated at the instigation of "our ancyent enemyes of ffrance".³ Executions for treason became frequent, but Richard was powerless to control his officials, for the Earl of Oxford was allowed to escape from confinement at Hames Castle, near Calais, and join Richmond. On June 23rd Richard issued a biting attack on "Henry Tydder" and his friends, from which it is clear that invasion was hourly expected, and probably before this the said Henry had formally announced his intention to assert his right to the Crown by force of arms⁴. Early in August it was announced that "the Kyngs enmysse be aland",⁵ indeed they

¹ *Croyland Contin.*, 572, *York Records*, 208-210.

² *Commines*, II. 66.

³ Letter in Harleian MS 787, f. 2^{vo}.

⁴ *Halliwell Letters*, I. 161-162.

⁵ *Paston Letters*, VI. 85.

had disembarked near Milford Haven on August 7th, and were daily gaining adherents as they marched through Wales to Shrewsbury. Richard mustered his forces at Nottingham, and thence marching through Leicester, pitched his camp about eight miles from the last-named town in the direction of Merevale Abbey. In addition to the two forces arrayed against one another there were two others in the field, led by Lord Stanley and Sir William Stanley respectively. Lord Stanley, though Richmond's stepfather, dared not declare himself openly against Richard, for his son Lord Strange was in the King's hands, but he was in correspondence with the invaders. When day broke on August 22nd both sides urged him to join them, but he temporised, and only disobedience to Richard's command on the part of his followers saved Lord Strange's life. Indeed Richard's men, though double the number of their opponents, were anything but enthusiastic to obey their leader. As an eyewitness reported later, the day was lost "through grete treason"¹ When the battle commenced, Northumberland, in command of the right, never struck a blow, and when Richard sought to win or lose all in a desperate effort to charge in with his centre division, it was the intervention of Sir William Stanley that finally turned the day against him and drove him to his death fighting fiercely to the last. Richmond was crowned on the battle-field as Henry VII. The corpse of the late King, thrown across a pack-horse, was carried to Leicester and buried obscurely there. True to the policy that they had followed for more than thirty years, the Londoners, who had provided Richard with £2000 to resist the "rebels," now sent a deputation to present Henry, as he advanced on London, with a gift of 1000 marks.² The Wars of the Roses were over.

Thus did the middle age in England close down on the field of Bosworth. During the days of Lancaster and York the blare of martial trumpets and the turbulence of liveried retainers compelled the average citizen to stand aside and watch the unprincipled quarrels of the great. The glories of decadent chivalry, the elaborate tournaments, the splendid banquets such as greeted the advent of the Bastard of Burgundy in 1467, the gilded extravagance of

¹ *York Records*, 218

² *City of London Journal*, 9, ff. 78^{vo}, 81, 84, 85^{vo}, 86^{vo}, cited in Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, 1, 326

the Court, seem to appear in striking contrast to a people harried by war, and unable to follow their peaceful avocations. But there is another side to the picture. The wars concerned the nobility and gentry far more than the great mass of the people; as a foreign observer put it, in England the troubles and misfortunes of war fell on those who waged it¹. The sacking of Ludlow and the ravaging of the country by Margaret's Moss-troopers were exceptional events, attributable to a foreigner's ignorance of the rules of the English political game. Edward IV. was fond of boasting that in the hour of victory he ever called on his men to spare the commons and slay the lords,² a policy which was to strengthen the nation as a whole in the end. The wars of Lancaster and York were in fact a drastic remedy for a fell disease. The health of the body politic had been threatened by the growth of a too powerful nobility, which had been corrupted by the evil habits engendered by campaigning in France, and had increased its wealth beyond the bounds of safety by the joining together of large inheritances and the pickings of a foreign war. That this nobility should spend thirty years in civil strife, till its manhood was slain and its possessions destroyed or forfeited, was but the fighting of the various germs within the body, which ultimately led to their own destruction and to the triumph of the patient's healthy constitution. Doubtless the body politic was on many occasions within measureable distance of annihilation: there were times when it appeared as if the disease might shatter its general health beyond recovery, but in the long run the commonalty suffered not so much from the war as from the lack of government that it entailed. Under cover of a dynastic struggle acts of the grossest injustice were perpetrated. Judges made no pretence of impartiality,³ but were ready to be coerced by force or won by bribes. The sheriffs were so unprincipled, that not only were they the subjects of parliamentary complaints, but in 1461 some attempt was made to better the administration of justice by transferring their criminal jurisdiction to the Justices of the Peace, a body which had been steadily gaining in importance since the days of Edward III.⁴ Juries were ready to perjure themselves for gifts from the litigants whose cases they decided, and the accounts of Abbot Wheathampsted of St. Albans reveal frequent gifts to judges and

¹ *Commissaries*, i. 444.

² *Ibid.* 207. Cf. *Rot. Parl.* vi. 193

³ *Paston Letters*, ii. 238.

⁴ *Rot. Parl.*, v. 493-494; *Statutes*, ii. 389-391.

sheriffs "for favours done" in some lawsuit or another.¹ The lawyer, quick to seize his opportunity, was able to demand such huge fees from his victims that the number of those entering the legal profession increased rapidly. Lawyers were genuinely hated throughout the fifteenth century, which confirmed the opinion of Gower that they were a "verbose tribe" who like harlots sold their love for money, and for whom unpleasant things were waiting in the next world.²

This lack of justice was but one manifestation of a general decadence in moral sense, which had been increasing ever since the renewal of the Hundred Years' War. Nowhere was this more evident than in the Church. Not that it is possible to bring a charge of complete decadence against the priesthood generally, but the spiritual point of view was lost between the turbulence of the baronage and the money-making of the commons. Mediaeval spirituality was giving place to modern materialism. Thus in 1465, when the friars provoked a debate on the mendicant controversy, their plea for apostolic poverty was cried down by the higher ecclesiastics, the beneficed clergy, and the King, while the London Alderman who tells the story has nothing to say in its support.³ It was only natural that under these circumstances the weaker brethren among the clergy should give cause for scandal. Parish priests eked out their scanty livelihood by thieving and poaching, or like "the persone of Wortham in Norfolke . . . haunted Newmarket heth, and there robbyd and spoyled many of the Kynges subgettes".⁴ In 1423 the Bishop of Lincoln inveighed against monks, especially those exempt from his jurisdiction.⁵ In 1432 it was needful to appoint a royal commission to reform the Cistercian monasteries up and down the country, and the fact that the men of Bynham supported the Bishop of Norwich in his quarrel with the monks of the local convent, proves how the religious had lost their hold on the people.⁶ Like so many of their countrymen they were too greedy for rich lands and "stateli mansions".

There were not wanting those who raised their voices against the iniquities of the time; not cheery satirists who made a sport of vice like Chaucer, but serious thinking men. Archbishop Bourchier

¹ Amundesham, *Annales*, ii. 256.

² *Vox Clamantis*, 284-298.

³ Gregory, 228-232.

⁴ Fabyan, 583.

⁵ Amundesham, *Annales*, i. 142.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 300-302.

appointed a commission for reforming the clergy; Thomas Netter of Walden found time between his attacks on Wyclifite doctrine to denounce the ease, luxury, and incontinence of his brethren;¹ Thomas Gascoigne inveighed against non-residence and its cause, appropriation, which was so much on the increase because the laity found that to hand over advowsons to monasteries was a cheap way of securing Masses for their souls. When the last-named was asked by Henry VI. why he was not a bishop, he answered, "If it were my aim honestly to acquire much money, I would rather be a good shoemaker than the most learned doctor in England, the state of things in England being such as it is in these days".² The greed of the lawyer and the commercialism of the merchant were influencing the Church, and this doubtless more than anything else caused the diminution of bequests to religious foundations. Men were the more careless because heresy was a dying force. An occasional burning marked the passing of a Lollard such as John Gardner in 1438, Richard Wyche in 1440, or John Goss in 1474, and there was a slight outbreak of heresy in 1467-1469. But Churchmen could afford to despise Lollardy, and this made them all the more intolerant of a man who condescended to argue with heretics in the mother tongue. Reginald Pecock, successively Bishop of St Asaph and Chichester, was in many ways the pioneer of new methods of thought. A firm believer in the constitution of the Church, he nevertheless offended the susceptibilities of his age by meeting the Lollard on his own ground, and proving that Scripture, on which so many attacks on the Church were based, must be interpreted in the light of logic and philosophy. The test of reason, he believed must be applied to faith, about which there could be no finality.³ but perhaps his worst crime in the eyes of contemporaries was his discovery that the Apostles' Creed was not framed by the Apostles themselves. Brought to book for his advanced opinions, he was compelled under threat of death to abjure his errors in 1457, and to spend the rest of his life in retirement.

The degradation of Pecock is understandable when we remember that England had only just begun to perceive the first

¹ *Doctrinale Fidei Catholicae contra Wiclefistas et Hussitas* (Venice, 1753-1759), 1 Lib. ii. Cap. lxvi.

² Gascoigne, 176-177.

streaks of the dawn of the new learning. Among the nobles who controlled English politics few had any outlook beyond their own ambitions ; the middle classes were bent only on their mercantile interests. The famous Italian scholar Poggio Bracciolini, who had visited England and for a time corresponded with Cardinal Beaufort, used to regale his friends with stories of the wealth and wonderful eating powers of Englishmen, but had nothing to say of their cult for letters.¹ Nevertheless, one or two finer minds had grasped the intellectual possibilities of the modern world. That unsuccessful politician, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, devoted himself whole-heartedly to the cult of letters, and was the first Englishman to look to Italy for the message of a new intellectual gospel. He corresponded with Italian Humanists, employing them to translate the works of Greek authors and to collect books for him. Some scholars he brought to England to enrich his growing library, and throughout he showed himself a keen patron of learning. Not only did he collect a magnificent library, composed very largely of classical authors, but he presented a large number of books to the University of Oxford, and promised to bequeath more at his death, thus becoming the real founder of what in a later age became known as the Bodleian Library. But Gloucester sowed the seed of the English literary révival of the next century, and it was cultivated by a small but enthusiastic band of scholars, including great nobles like John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, princely ecclesiastics like William Grey, and poor students like John Free, Fleming, and Gunthorpe.

Still, higher education, as we may call it, was at a discount. Though colleges were founded at the two Universities from time to time, there was a constant dearth of money for the educational side of university life.² Among great schools fifteenth-century Eton was added to the fourteenth-century Winchester, but the real growth of education was among local grammar schools, which in many cases were connected with secular institutions. Thus guilds at Ludlow, Worcester, and Bristol maintained free schools,³ at Coventry John Barton was given permission by the civic authorities to settle in the town if he would keep a grammar school, a pro-

¹ Vespasiano, *Vite di Uomini Illustri* (Florence, 1859), 547-548.

² Bekynton Correspondence, 1. 55-56.

³ English Gilds, 198, 204-205, 288.

ceeding which did not fail to cause friction with the monastic school already established there.¹ In London so many new secular schools had sprung up that a petition against them was laid before Parliament by the ecclesiastical authorities, who claimed the supervision of all instruction. The education of girls was not neglected, they were included with boys in educational enactments, and there seem to have been women among the teachers, though doubtless their number was not great. These schools were obviously founded for children of the middle class, for the sons of the nobility and gentry were educated either in a monastery, or in the household of some great magnate, where they were taught deportment rather than grammar. Even the artizan was not forgotten, for when founding Jesus College in his native village in Yorkshire in 1483, Archbishop Rotherham ordered that "because that county produces many youths endowed with light and sharpness of ability, who do not all wish to attain the dignity and elevation of the priesthood" one master "learned and skilled in the art of writing and accounts" should be appointed "that these may be better fitted for the mechanical arts and other concerns of this world".² Education was undoubtedly spreading to all classes of the community, though its quality remained about the same. Of the twenty witnesses examined with regard to Sir John Fastolf's will, eleven were described as "illiterati," but the nine "literate" witnesses included merchants, husbandmen, a mariner, and a tailor.³ Merchants of course were obliged to master the elements of reading and writing, now that commercial enterprises were being undertaken on a much larger scale, and letter-writing among this class was an accomplishment which presented no great difficulties, though it is clear that they did not waste time over the unnecessary art of spelling.⁴ Indeed we are forced to attribute the spread of education far more to the commercial instinct of the nation than to any love of learning. As the century drew to its close the popularisation of education was rendered still more possible by the discovery of printing. The London mercer, William Caxton, who abandoned his profession to develop this art, moved his press from Bruges to Westminster in

¹ *Coventry Leet Book*, 101, 190.

² *Educational Charters* (ed. A. F. Leach, Cambridge, 1911), 424.

³ *Paston Letters*, iv. 236-245.

⁴ See e.g. *Cely Papers* (Camden Soc.).

1476, and opened his publishing career there with an English translation from the French by Lord Rivers, entitled "Dyctes and Sayengis of the Philosophres". From the first Caxton catered for the general rather than for the scholarly reader, printing works in the vernacular in preference to classical languages, but it is remarkable that when the St. Albans press was established before the end of the century its chief output consisted of scholastic books. Caxton himself could not cope with the demand for printed matter, and a special exemption was made in favour of books and their printers in the act of 1484, which put restraints on artificers and merchants in the interests of their English rivals¹

The full effects of the introduction of printing and of the classical revival were not to show themselves till the limits of our period were past, but from the economic point of view all the elements that helped to build up modern England had appeared in 1485. Despite war and turbulence the prospects of the country had been rising steadily. Increased commerce meant increased individual prosperity, especially as the population cannot have grown in the same proportion as wealth. Plagues had appeared at irregular, but frequent, intervals all through the fifteenth century, and in the last few years they had come thick and fast. In 1471 there was a terrible attack, "the most unyversall dethe that evyr I wyst in Ingelonde," wrote Sir John Paston, whose inquiries from travellers failed to elicit a single borough or town which was not infected² Two years later there was another outbreak of "unyversalle feveres, axes, and the bloody flyx"³ In 1485 there appeared for the first time that "pestilential fever" called the sweating sickness, which was to prove such a scourge in later years After Edward IV's expedition to France many died of disease Then came a great disease called the "styche," and another after that called the "flyx" that had never been seen in England before. Three years this lasted, only to be succeeded by another pestilence which raged for another three years.⁴ Such a series of visitations must have been a considerable hindrance to trade, but at the same time it did much towards solving the problem of over-population, which explains why at the end of the century the standard of comfort was far higher than at the beginning. The splendour of

¹ Statutes, II. 493

² Warkworth, 23.

³ *Paston Letters*, V. 110.

⁴ *Brut*, 604.

the households of the magnates, with their elaborate regulations, and their hosts of servants exceeded anything hitherto known, and sumptuary laws show that the dress of labourers also was rising in quality. Citizens were able to afford to pay higher rents for their houses than heretofore.¹ Some feeling existed no doubt of the inequalities of wealth, and it is reflected in the Robin Hood Ballads, the date of which, though uncertain, may be confidently placed somewhere in the latter part of the fifteenth century, but on the whole this was a tendency more clearly apparent after 1485. In the opinion of Sir John Fortescue, the Lancastrian lawyer who made his peace with Edward IV. after the battle of Tewkesbury, "the comune peple of thys londe are the beste fedde, and also the best cledde of any natyon, crystyn or heathen".² The commonalty indeed loomed large in all calculations of this political philosopher, who devoted much space in his *Governance of England* to a detailed argument of the ills that would come to England if "the commons thereoff were pouere".³

The men who lived in the latter part of the fifteenth century were by no means pessimists as to the state of the country. Fortescue could boast that property was not concentrated in a few hands, but that the commons as well as the baionage had a stake in the kingdom,⁴ and that the nation had at least in theory a say in the management of its affairs. States according to him could be divided into three groups, "Dominium Regale," "Dominium Politicum," and "Dominium Regale et Politicum," and England came under the third of these classifications. Englishmen by now had abundantly realised the theory of a limited monarchy, as a later age was to call it. The King, said Fortescue, existed for the sake of the kingdom, not the kingdom for the sake of the King,⁵ and his power was given him for the protection of his subjects, persons, and goods, and for the maintenance of the laws.⁶ Even Fortescue allowed that there were abuses to be remedied. He saw clearly that though the royal revenues might be enough to maintain the household, the King needed more money to fulfil his duties as a public servant. With a poor King the whole safety

¹ *Medieval Records of a London Church* (Early Eng. Text Soc., 1905), 125.

² *Fortescue's Works* (ed. Clermont, 1869), i. 552.

³ Ed. Plummer, 137-140.

⁴ *Works*, i. 359-360.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 86, 118.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 347.

of the body politic might be endangered by "overe myghtye subgettes . . . for certanly ther may no grettir perell growe to a prince, than to have a subgett equepolent to hym selff". To meet these dangers Fortescue advised a resumption act based on general principles, and not intended merely to hit political opponents, and greater care in the grant of gifts and pensions in the future. "Trewly it were bettir, that a private person lakked in rewarde whic he had well deserved, then that be his rewarde the gode publike and all the lande were hurte."¹ He also advocated a thorough reorganisation of the Privy Council. Hitherto it had consisted almost exclusively of the "gretteste lordes" and men "in grete auctorite and offices," and no "lower man" durst take a line in opposition to them. The new plan suggested by Fortescue was that a council of twenty-four, half clerical and half lay, should be chosen from "the wysest and best disposed men that can be ffounde in all the parties off this lande," to whom should be added four Lords Spiritual and four Lords Temporal.² Thus the King was advised to look outside the narrow circle, which all through the century had been tightening its hold over the Government, and to bring into political activity other elements in the nation. It was a plan that had been tried more than once before, but it had failed, thanks to the machinations of the nobility. Yet the time was coming when the Tudors would build up a firm state on the basis now suggested by this fifteenth-century lawyer.

Turmoils and tribulations did not blind Fortescue to the fundamental strength of the English nation. He saw that reform was a possible alternative to revolution, and the state of the country appeared to him to be vastly in advance of that of France, where the poor were oppressed by the rich in a way quite impossible in England.³ This comparison with France indeed reveals at a glance the real strength of the English polity. During the two centuries which divide 1485 from 1272, England had advanced both in economic prosperity and in political stability. The turmoils of the last fifty years had not really undermined the foundations of the nation, which, unlike France, had grasped once and for all the doctrine of national unity. Moreover, her constitution was fluid not fixed. Whereas France was groping towards unity through

¹ *Governance of England*, 126-130, 142 144.

² *Ibid.*, 145 149

³ *Ibid.*, 114-115.

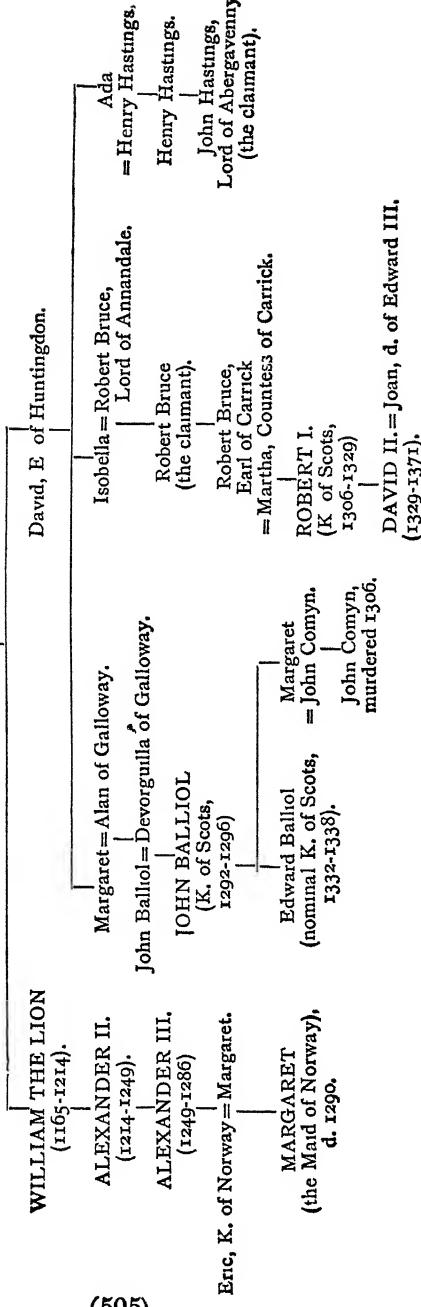
despotism, England had thrown off despotism, but had not forgotten the ideal of unity. As Fortescue declared, King and people together might govern the country without the hard and fast laws of despotism, which made progress, both economic and political, so hard.¹ The spirit of growth was not quenched, the possibilities of development were greater than ever before. This was the legacy to posterity bequeathed by the later middle age.

¹ *Works*, I. 364-367.

I

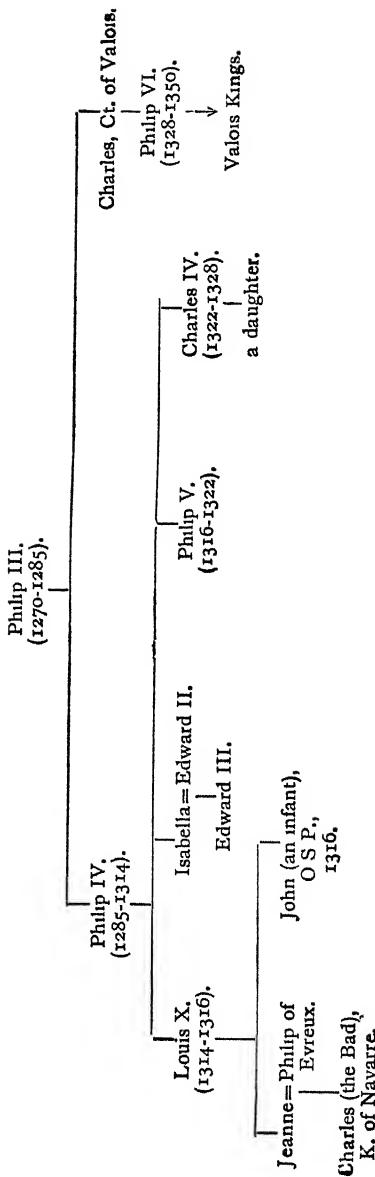
THE SCOTTISH SUCCESSION QUESTION, 1290

Henry, son of King DAVID I. d. 1152.

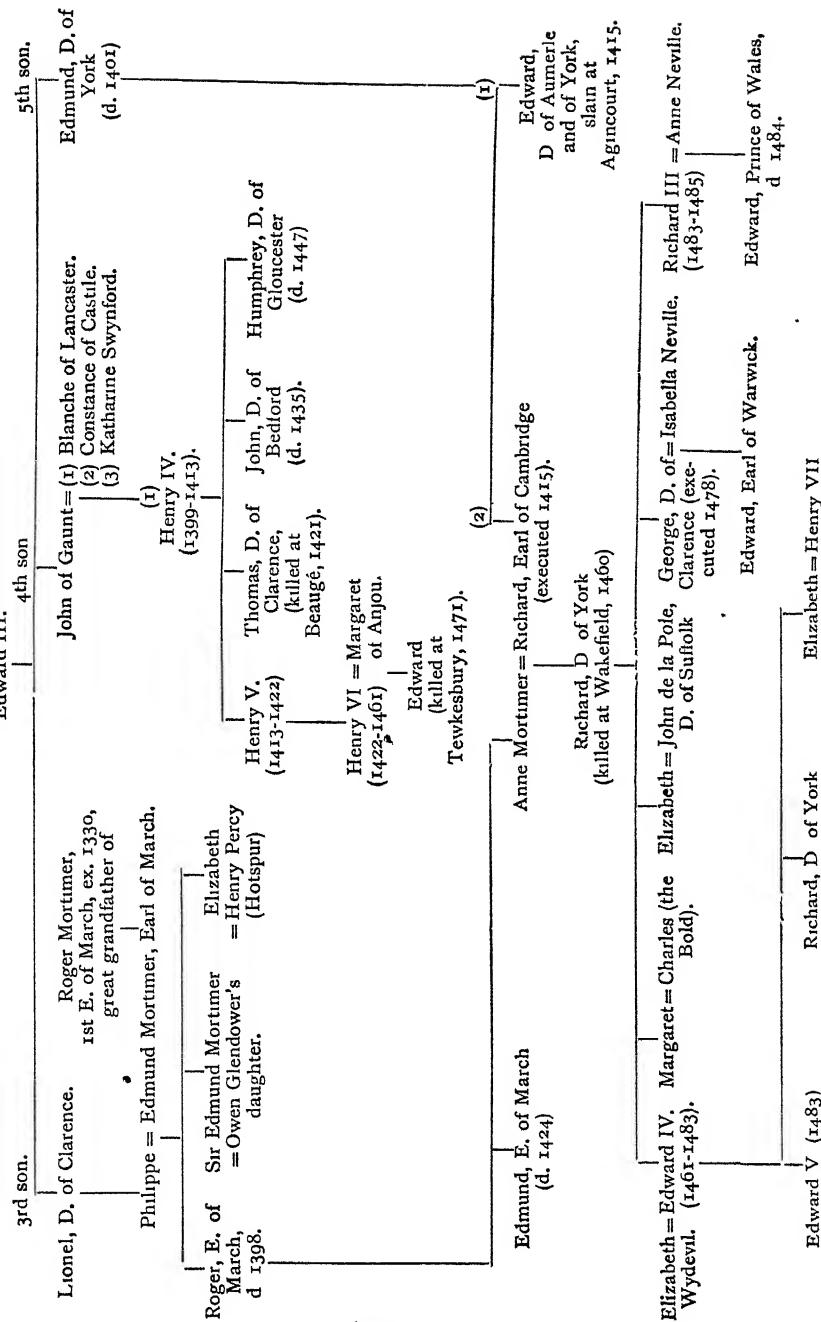


II

EDWARD III.'S CLAIM TO THE FRENCH THRONE



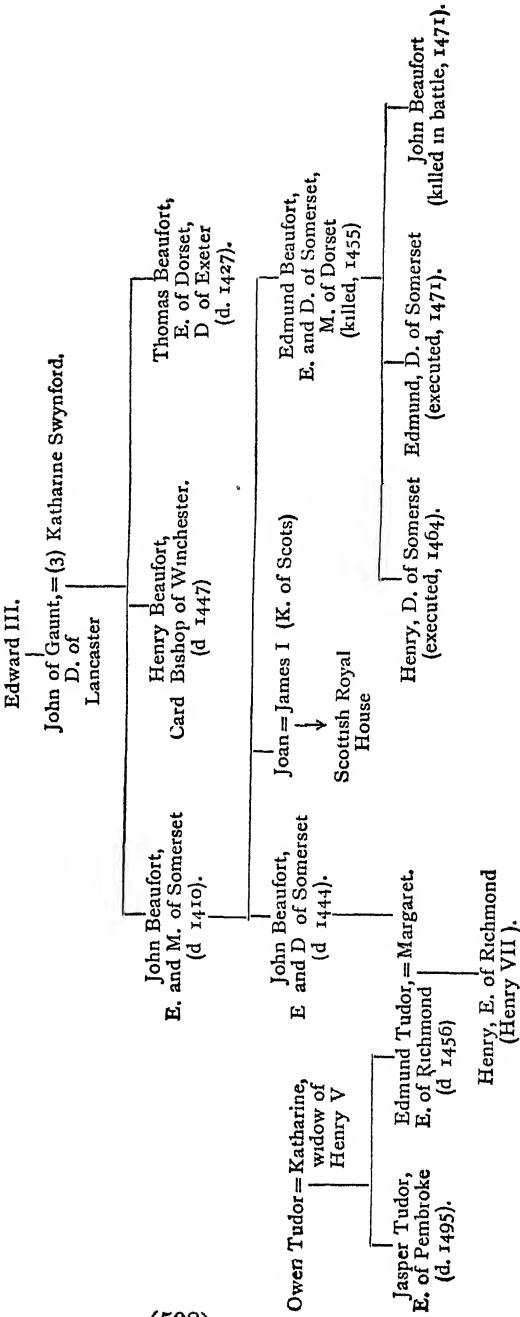
YORK AND LANCASTER



IV

THE HOUSE OF BEAUFORT AND TUDOR

(508)



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CONSIDERATIONS of space have made it impossible to include a complete bibliography. The lists here given are merely meant to show the works indicated by short references in the text. Where an authority has been infrequently cited the full reference has been given in the note and the work will not be found in this list. The references have been roughly classified, but in their various classes they have been put in alphabetical rather than chronological order, to facilitate their speedy recognition.

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